

“Unified in Passion, Patience, Perspective, Prayer & Purpose”

Acts 1:12-26

January 18, 2015

INTRO: *Imagine hearing:* _____

“You’ve just won the Super Bowl...

What are you going to do next?

OR

“You’ve just won the largest power-ball lotto ever... what’s next?”

“What do you want?”

- Jesus, the Christ

“My Utmost for His Highest”

I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” — Isaiah 6:8

When we talk about the call of God, we often forget the most important thing, namely, the nature of Him who calls. There are many things calling each of us today. Some of these calls will be answered, and others will not even be heard. The call is the expression of the nature of the One who calls, and we can only recognize the call if that same nature is in us. The call of God is the expression of God’s nature, not ours. God providentially weaves the threads of His call through our lives, and only we can distinguish them. It is the threading of God’s voice directly to us over a certain concern, and it is useless to seek another person’s opinion of it. Our dealings over the call of God should be kept exclusively between ourselves and Him.

The call of God is not a reflection of my nature; my personal desires and temperament are of no consideration. As long as I dwell on my own qualities and traits and think about what I am suited for, I will never hear the call of God. But when God brings me into the right relationship with Himself, I will be in the same condition Isaiah was. Isaiah was so attuned to God, because of the great crisis he had just endured, that the call of God penetrated his soul. The majority of us cannot hear anything but ourselves. And we cannot hear anything God says. But to be brought to the place where we can hear the call of God is to be profoundly changed.

- Oswald chambers devotional

REVIEW: Acts 1:1-11

***God has a power-filled people
&
a purposed plan... called Church!***

- 1. *Vision*** (vv.1-2)
- 2. *Fusion*** (and Con-fusion) (vv.3-7)
- 3. *Mission*** (and Co-Mission) (v.8)
- 4. *Ascension-Tension*** (vv.9-11)

4 Overarching Themes:

Acts 1:4 = **Wait!** (picking back up today in vv.12-26)

Acts 1:6 =

Jesus = *“kingdom of God”*

VS.

Sinners = **“kingdom of us”**

Acts 1:8 = *God’s People Power Purpose & Plan*

Acts 1:9 = **His flyin’ means NO denyin’**

12Then

*they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. **13**And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.*

They obeyed their Lord's commandment and returned to Jerusalem "**with great joy**" (Luke 24:52).

...at worship in the temple (Luke 24:53).

T/S: How easy it would have been for someone to bring division into this beautiful assembly of humble people!

14 All these with one mind/accord were continually devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

NOTE: Mary, Jesus' mother, is also mentioned here—her only appearance in Acts ([v. 14](#)). Luke had presented her as a model of trust and obedience in his Gospel ([Luke 1:38](#)). Now we see that she "not only gave birth to her Son; she also assisted in the birth of the church." The undue veneration of her by some should not hinder us from appreciating the important role she played in the history of salvation.

"with one accord" = found 6X in Acts ([1:14](#); [2:1, 46](#); [4:24](#); [5:12](#); [15:25](#); & note also [2:44](#)).

There was among these believers a wonderful unity that bound them together in Christ ([Gal. 3:28](#)), the kind of unity that Christians need today.

Psalm 133

***1Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brothers to dwell together in unity!***

***2It is like the precious oil upon the head,
Coming down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard,
Coming down upon the edge of his robes.***

3*It is like the dew of Hermon
Coming down upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the LORD commanded the blessing—
life forever.*

It is not enough for Christians to have faith in the Lord; they must also have faith in one another.

- Warren Wiersbe

“B.E. Commentary” QUOTE:

They Believed in Prayer - Prayer plays a significant role in the story of the church as recorded in the Book of Acts. The believers prayed for guidance in making decisions ([Acts 1:15-26](#)) and for courage to witness for Christ ([Acts 4:23-31](#)). In fact, prayer was a normal part of their daily ministry ([Acts 2:42-47](#); [3:1](#); [6:4](#)). Stephen prayed as he was being stoned ([Acts 7:55-60](#)). Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans ([Acts 8:14-17](#)), and Saul of Tarsus prayed after his conversion ([Acts 9:11](#)). Peter prayed before he raised Dorcas from the dead ([Acts 9:36-43](#)). Cornelius prayed that God would show him how to be saved ([Acts 10:1-4](#)), and Peter was on the housetop praying when God told him how to be the answer to Cornelius' prayers ([Acts 10:9](#)).

The believers in Mark's house prayed for Peter when he was in prison, and the Lord delivered him both from prison and from death ([Acts 12:1-11](#)). The church at Antioch fasted and prayed before sending out Barnabas and Paul ([Acts 13:1-3](#); and note [14:23](#)). It was at a prayer meeting in Philippi that God opened Lydia's heart ([Acts 16:13](#)), and another prayer meeting in Philippi opened the prison doors ([Acts 16:25ff](#)). Paul prayed for his Ephesian-Elder friends before leaving them ([Acts 20:36; 21:5](#)). In the midst of a storm, he prayed for God's blessing ([Acts 27:35](#)), and after a storm, he prayed that God would heal a sick man ([Acts 28:8](#)). In almost every chapter in Acts you find a reference to prayer, and the book makes it very clear that something happens when God's people pray.

This is certainly a good lesson for the church today. Prayer is both the thermometer and the thermostat of the local church; for the "spiritual temperature" either goes up or down, depending on how God's people pray (or don't pray).

*"Prayer is a shield to the soul,
a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan."*

- John Bunyan

***** Prayer = 31X in Acts in 20 chapters**

Unanimity (a.k.a. “koinonia”) in community life is a key theme in Acts...

The word translated "***constantly***" "is often connected with prayer ([Acts 1:14](#); [2:42, 46](#); [Rom. 12:12](#); [Col. 4:2](#))... It means resolute, obstinate, persistence." The **idea of "prevailing prayer"** comes from this word.

T/S: [1:15-26](#) This was the first church business meeting.

*15*In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120)

To these 120 people ([Acts 1:15](#)) the Lord had given the solemn responsibility of bearing witness to a lost world, and none of them could do the job alone... As they waited and worshiped together, they were being better prepared for the work that lay before them.

and (Peter) said,

16“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled,

which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

17For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”

Those privileged to be close to the truth are not necessarily committed to the truth.

They were ordained twelve, with an eye to the twelve tribes of Israel, descended from the twelve patriarchs; they were the twelve stars that make up the church's crown ([Revelation 12:1](#)), and for them twelve thrones were designated, [Matthew 19:28](#).

- Matthew Henry's Commentary

18(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. **19**And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20 "For it is written in the Psalms,

"May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it";

and

"Let another take his office.'

Augustine said,

*"The New is in the Old concealed;
the Old is by the New revealed."*

No clearer description of inspiration can be found anywhere in Scripture. The Bible was written when "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21).

Judas represents the greatest example of wasted opportunity in all of history.

T/S: 1:21-25 This gives us a good example of how to proceed when we are making important decisions.

- 1. Set up criteria consistent with the Bible,**
- 2. Examine the alternatives,**
- 3. Pray for wisdom and guidance.**

1:26 The disciples became *apostles*. *Disciple* means "follower or learner," and *apostle* means "messenger or missionary."

-Life Application Study Bible.

21So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **22**beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”

23And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias.

24And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen **25**to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

That prayer shows what we should be looking for most in a leader: "Lord, you know everyone's heart..." (v. 24).

Prayer and revival. Luke clearly wants to communicate the fact that a key way in which the disciples prepared for the coming of the Spirit was through prayer ([vv. 13-14](#)).

The idea of "prevailing prayer" (cf. above) presents one key to powerful praying: praying without giving up until the answer comes. (cf. parable of persistent widow [Luke 18:1-8](#)).

But why do we need to keep on praying?

Prayer makes us ready,
for in communion with God
our hearts are attuned to his will.

*Pray for God's involvement
more than your desired outcome.*

Furthermore, **prayer is a way of engaging in spiritual warfare against Satan and his forces. Battle language is often used for prayer (cf. Rom. 15:13; Col. 4:12).** Immediately after Paul's famous exposition on spiritual warfare in Ephesians, he says, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" ([Eph. 6:18](#)).

ILLUSTRATIONS of APPLICATION:

A). In the 1850s the United States was in a weak spiritual state, as people were preoccupied with concern for material things. In 1857 a quiet forty-six-year-old businessman, Jeremiah Lanphier, felt led to start a noon-time weekly prayer meeting in New York City, in which business people could meet for prayer. Anyone could attend, for a few minutes or for the entire hour. On the first day Lanphier prayed alone for half an hour. But by the end of the hour six men from at least four denominational backgrounds had joined him. Twenty came the next week and forty the week after. Soon they decided to meet daily, and the group swelled to over one hundred. Pastors who came started morning prayer meetings in their own churches. Soon similar meetings were being held all over America. Within six months there were more than ten thousand meeting daily in New York City alone. This was the start of what is now termed "The Great Awakening" in North America. It is estimated that in a two-year period (1857-1859), two million people were led to Christ (out of a population of thirty million).

B). [Isaiah 62:6-7](#):

*I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;
they will never be silent day or night.
You who call on the LORD,
give yourselves no rest,
and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem
and makes her the praise of the earth.*

C). Often an individual has a burden that may not be shared by others but which triggers individual prevailing prayer. In November 1844 George Mueller began to pray for the conversion of five individuals. He says, "I prayed every day without one single intermission, whether sick or in health, on the land or on the sea, and whatever the pressure of my engagements might be." After eighteen months of such praying, the first of the five was converted. Five years later the second came, and the third after another six years. In his sermon Mueller said that he had been praying for thirty-six years for the other two, but they still remained unconverted. His biographer says that one of those two "became a Christian before Mueller's death and the other a few years later."

D). see THE BRIDGE ministry... www.Pray4StJ.com

Pray 4 St J
.com



Look... Love. Live!

LOOK

beyond your-self...

LOVE

beyond your-self.

LIVE

beyond your-self!

W
a
n
t

t
o

B
E
?



C
o
m
e
&
S
e
e
!

www . Pray 4 St J . com

*Christian ministry is essentially spiritual in nature,
and external qualifications are useless if a person's
heart is not right with God.*

We must be careful i
n making choices of leaders.

One thing I always look for is whether the applicant has been part of a close community that practices spiritual accountability over a considerable period of time. Usually in such a fellowship one's heart is revealed, and the inability to be part of such a group may indicate a serious spiritual sickness or problem.

- NIV Application Commentary

26 *And they cast lots for them,*

and the lot fell on Matthias,

and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

BRIDGE examples of Joseph & Matthias BE-ing in “one accord”

Jerusalem (local)

Kent Island... new sanctuary & international “hub”

50+ children at Stepping Stones

A.I.T.

Financial Health Ministry

VBX dates set (July 13th – 17th) email & sign up NOW.

Crossroads Community (serving the least of these)

VIDEO: ***“Crossroads Companion Ministry”***

Judea & Samaria (regional)

Carter Center (9 personal prayer requests + staff)

Witzit Center (monthly & holidays)

Baltimore: Helping Up Mission

Baltimore: Graffiti Church Plant

St. J (NEW: Postcards & Mike going into the prison tonight)

Alaska: 2 discussions this week (preliminary & ready-to-go!)

“Ends of the earth” (globally)

Uganda – equipping disciples (old & young)

Actively reaching out to India

T/S: VIDEO: “Learning To Be the Light”

Let's Pray

12Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

13And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.

14All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

15In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, **16**"Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. **17**For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry."

18(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. **19**And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) **20**"For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

"May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it";

and

"Let another take his office.'

21So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **22**beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." **23**And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. **24**And

they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen [25](#) to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." [26](#) And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

They Believed in Each Other (Acts 1:12-14)

They obeyed their Lord's commandment and returned to Jerusalem "with great joy" ([Luke 24:52](#)). It is likely that the group met in the Upper Room where the last Passover had been celebrated, but **they were also found at worship in the temple ([Luke 24:53](#)).**

What a variety of people made up that first assembly of believers! There were men and women, apostles and "ordinary" people, and even members of the Lord's earthly family (see [Matt. 13:55](#); [Mark 6:3](#)). His "brethren" had not believed in Him during His ministry ([John 7:5](#)), but they did come to trust Him after the Resurrection ([Acts 1:14](#)). Mary was there as a member of the assembly, participating in worship and prayer along with the others. The center of their fellowship was the risen Christ, and all of them adored and magnified Him.

How easy it would have been for someone to bring division into this beautiful assembly of humble people! The members of the Lord's family might have claimed special recognition, or Peter could have been criticized for his cowardly denial of the Saviour. Or perhaps Peter might have blamed John, because it was John who brought him into the high priest's house ([John 18:15-16](#)). John might well have reminded the others that *he* had faithfully stood at the cross, and had even been chosen

by the Saviour to care for His mother. But there was none of this. In fact, nobody was even arguing over who among them was the greatest!

The key phrase is "*with one accord*," a phrase that is **found six times in Acts (1:14; 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; and note also 2:44)**. There was **among these believers a wonderful unity that bound them together in Christ (Ps. 133; Gal. 3:28), the kind of unity that Christians need today.**

"I do not want the walls of separation between different orders of Christians to be destroyed," said the godly British preacher Rowland Hill, "but only lowered, that we may shake hands a little easier over them!"

It is not enough for Christians to have faith in the Lord; they must also have faith in one another.

- Warren Wiersbe

QUOTE:

To these 120 people (**Acts 1:15**) the Lord had given the solemn responsibility of bearing witness to a lost world, and none of them could do the job alone. They would experience severe persecution in the days ahead, and one of them, James, would lay down his life for Christ... It was a time for praying together and standing together in the Lord. As they waited and worshiped together, they were being better prepared for the work that lay before them.

QUOTE:

They Believed in Prayer (Acts 1:15, 24-25)

Prayer plays a significant role in the story of the church as recorded in the Book of Acts. The believers prayed for guidance in making decisions ([Acts 1:15-26](#)) and for courage to witness for Christ ([Acts 4:23-31](#)). In fact, prayer was a normal part of their daily ministry ([Acts 2:42-47](#); [3:1](#); [6:4](#)). Stephen prayed as he was being stoned ([Acts 7:55-60](#)). Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans ([Acts 8:14-17](#)), and Saul of Tarsus prayed after his conversion ([Acts 9:11](#)). Peter prayed before he raised Dorcas from the dead ([Acts 9:36-43](#)). Cornelius prayed that God would show him how to be saved ([Acts 10:1-4](#)), and Peter was on the housetop praying when God told him how to be the answer to Cornelius' prayers ([Acts 10:9](#)).

The believers in Mark's house prayed for Peter when he was in prison, and the Lord delivered him both from prison and from death ([Acts 12:1-11](#)). The church at Antioch fasted and prayed before sending out Barnabas and Paul ([Acts 13:1-3](#); and note [14:23](#)). It was at a prayer meeting in Philippi that God opened Lydia's heart ([Acts 16:13](#)), and another prayer meeting in Philippi opened the prison doors ([Acts 16:25ff](#)). Paul prayed for his Ephesian-Elder friends before leaving them ([Acts 20:36](#); [21:5](#)). In the midst of a storm, he prayed for God's blessing ([Acts 27:35](#)), and after a storm, he prayed that God would heal a sick man ([Acts 28:8](#)). In almost every chapter in Acts you find a reference to prayer, and the book makes it very clear that something happens when God's people pray.

This is certainly a good lesson for the church today. Prayer is both the thermometer and the thermostat of the local church; for the "spiritual temperature" either goes up or down, depending on how God's people pray (or don't pray).

QUOTE:

John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, said:

*"Prayer is a shield to the soul,
a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan."*

A radio listener once wrote to ask me, "Why do you teach from the Old Testament? After all, it's ancient history and it's all been fulfilled by Jesus!" I explained that the only "Bible" the early church had was the Old Testament, and yet they were able to use it to discover the will of God. **We need both the Old and the New; in fact, the New Testament writers often quote from the Old Testament to prove their point.**

Augustine said,

*"The New is in the Old concealed;
the Old is by the New revealed."*

Certainly we must interpret the Old by the New, but we must not think that God no longer speaks to His people through the Old Testament Scriptures. "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable*" ([2 Tim. 3:16](#), italics mine). "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" ([Matt. 4:4](#), italics mine). We must use the whole Bible and balance Scripture with Scripture as we seek to discover the mind of God.

NOTE: The 12 Apostles ministered primarily to the twelve tribes of Israel, while Paul was sent to the Gentiles ([Gal. 2:1-10](#)).

CRITICAL Contextual Concept:

It was necessary that twelve men witness at Pentecost to the twelve tribes of Israel, and also that twelve men be prepared to sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes ([Luke 22:28-30](#)). From [Acts 2-7](#), the witness was primarily to Israel, "to the Jew first" (see [Rom. 1:16](#); [Acts 3:26](#); [13:46](#)). Once the message had gone to the Gentiles ([Acts 10-11](#)), this Jewish emphasis began to decline. When the Apostle James was martyred, he was not replaced ([Acts 12](#)). Why? Because the official witness to Israel was now completed and the message was going out to Jews and Gentiles alike. There was no more need for 12 Apostles to give witness to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Prayer, Casting Lots, & the Holy Spirit:

The believers prayed for God's guidance before they "voted," because they wanted to select the man that God had already chosen ([Prov. 16:33](#)). Their exalted Lord was working in them and through them from heaven. This is the last instance in the Bible of the casting of lots, and there is no reason why believers today should use this approach in determining God's will. While it is not always easy to discover what God wants us to do, if we are willing to obey Him, He will reveal His will to us ([John 7:17](#)). What is important is that we follow the example of the early church by emphasizing the Word of God and prayer.

- **Bible Exposition Commentary** - Be Dynamic (Acts 1-12).

1:12, 13 **After Christ was taken up into heaven, the disciples immediately returned to Jerusalem and had a prayer meeting.** Jesus had said they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days, so they waited and prayed. **When you face a difficult task, an important decision, or a baffling dilemma, don't rush into the work and just hope it comes out the way it should. Instead, make your first step prayer for the Holy Spirit's power and guidance.**

1:13 A "Zealot" could mean anyone zealous for the Jewish law. The Zealots may have been a radical political party working for the violent overthrow of Roman rule in Israel.

1:14 At this time, **Jesus' brothers were with the disciples. During Jesus' lifetime, they had not believed he was the Messiah ([John 7:5](#)), but his resurrection must have convinced them.** Jesus' special

appearance to James, one of his brothers, may have been an especially significant event in their conversion (see [1 Corinthians 15:7](#)).

1:15-26 This was the first church business meeting. The small group of 11 had already grown to more than 120. **The main order of business was to appoint a new disciple, or apostle, as the 11 were now called. While the apostles waited, they were doing what they could—praying, seeking God's guidance, and getting organized. Waiting for God to work does not mean sitting around doing nothing. We must do what we can, while we can, as long as we don't run ahead of God.**

1:16, 17 How could someone who had been with Jesus daily betray him? Judas had received the same calling and teaching as everyone else. But he had chosen to reject Christ. Judas hardened his heart and joined in the plot with Jesus' enemies to put him to death. Judas remained unrepentant to the end, and he finally committed suicide. Although Jesus predicted this would happen, it was Judas's choice. Those privileged to be *close* to the truth are not necessarily *committed* to the truth.

See Judas's Profile in [Mark 14, p. 1655](#) for more information on his life.

1:18 Matthew says that Judas hanged himself ([Matthew 27:5](#)); Acts says that he fell. The traditional explanation is that when Judas hanged himself, the rope or branch broke, Judas fell, and his body burst open.

1:21, 22 Many consistently followed Jesus throughout his ministry on earth. The 12 disciples were his inner circle, but others shared the disciples' deep love for and commitment to Jesus.

1:21-25 The apostles had to choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot. They outlined specific criteria for making the choice. After finalists were

chosen, the apostles prayed, asking God to guide the selection process. **This gives us a good example of how to proceed when we are making important decisions. Set up criteria consistent with the Bible, examine the alternatives, and pray for wisdom and guidance to reach a wise decision.**

1:26 The disciples became *apostles*. *Disciple* means "follower or learner," and *apostle* means "messenger or missionary." These men now had the special assignment of spreading the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection.

-Life Application Study Bible.

Mary, Jesus' mother, is also mentioned here—her only appearance in Acts (v. 14). Luke had presented her as a model of trust and obedience in his Gospel (Luke 1:38). Now we see that she "not only gave birth to her Son; she also assisted in the birth of the church." The undue veneration of her by some should not hinder us from appreciating the important role she played in the history of salvation.

Luke-Acts abounds with references to prayer (mentioned thirty-one [31] times in Acts and appears in twenty of its chapters). Thus, it is not surprising to find that, as the followers of Jesus

wait for the promised baptism of the Spirit, they "all joined together constantly in prayer" (v. 14). The word translated "together" (*homothymadon*) literally means "with one mind or passion" and is a favorite word of Luke.

Unanimity in community life is a key theme in Acts, one that we will discuss in connection with other passages that unmistakably indicate this idea (4:32; 6:5; 15:25).

The word translated "*constantly*" "is often connected with prayer ([Acts 1:14](#); [2:42, 46](#); [Rom. 12:12](#); [Col. 4:2](#))... It means resolute, obstinate, persistence." The **idea of "prevailing prayer"** comes from this word.

Luke's digression about how Judas died ([vv. 18-19](#)) uses the word "wickedness," which shows that, while the betrayal was predicted in Scripture, it was a serious act of treachery. This eliminates the views of those who try to "rehabilitate" Judas by showing that his motives for betraying Christ were honorable. Jesus said, "The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him" ([Luke 22:22](#)).

The church cast lots since they felt a need for direct divine guidance on the final choice between the two equally qualified people. But the use of lots comes only after prayer for God's guidance. **That prayer shows what we should be looking for most in a leader: "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen" (v. 24).** The believers had found two people with

suitable external qualifications, but those would be useless if the person's heart was not right. Only God knows the hearts of people unerringly, so they ask his help. Like most of the other apostles, the new apostle Matthias does not appear again in Acts. Later tradition presents him as a missionary to the Ethiopians.

Prayer and revival. Luke clearly wants to communicate the fact that a key way in which the disciples prepared for the coming of the Spirit was through prayer ([vv. 13-14](#)). The connection between these two factors is well established in the Bible, especially in the Lukan writings. **Arthur Matthews** goes so far as to say that "*the spiritual history of a mission or church is written in its prayer life.*" This passage, therefore, has much to teach us about prayer.

The idea of "prevailing prayer" (cf. above) presents one key to powerful praying: praying without giving up until the answer comes. Jesus said that we "should always pray and not give up," and gave **the parable of the persistent widow** to illustrate that point ([Luke 18:1-8](#)).

But why do we need to keep on praying?

Prayer makes us ready,
for in communion with God
our hearts are attuned to his will.

Furthermore, **prayer is a way of engaging in spiritual warfare against Satan and his forces. Battle language is often used for prayer (cf. Rom. 15:13; Col. 4:12).** Immediately after Paul's famous exposition on spiritual warfare in Ephesians, he says, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" ([Eph. 6:18](#)).

ILLUSTRATIONS of APPLICATION:

A). In the 1850s the United States was in a weak spiritual state, as people were preoccupied with concern for material things. In 1857 a quiet forty-six-year-old businessman, Jeremiah Lanphier, felt led to start a noon-time weekly prayer meeting in New York City, in which business people could meet for prayer. Anyone could attend, for a few minutes or for the entire hour. On the first day Lanphier prayed alone for half an hour. But by the end of the hour six men from at least four denominational backgrounds had joined him. Twenty came the next week and forty the week after. Soon they decided to meet daily, and the group swelled to over one hundred. Pastors who came started morning prayer meetings in their own churches. Soon similar meetings were being held all over America. Within six months there were more than ten thousand meeting daily in New York City alone. This was the start of what is now termed "The Great Awakening" in North America. It is estimated that in a two-year period (1857-1859), two million

people were led to Christ (out of a population of thirty million).

B). In 1949, in the village of Barvas in the Hebrides Islands (off Scotland), the parish minister along with his church leaders began to pray for revival. In the same village two sisters in their eighties, whose poor health did not allow them to attend worship, prayed in their cottage for revival in Barvas. God gave them a promise: "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground" ([Isa. 44:3](#)). On the other side of Barvas, knowing nothing about the others, seven young men met three nights a week in a barn to pray for revival. They committed themselves to prayer in keeping with [Isaiah 62:6-7](#):

*I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;
they will never be silent day or night.
You who call on the LORD,
give yourselves no rest,
and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem
and makes her the praise of the earth.*

The result of all this prayer was wave upon wave of revival over the entire island, through which thousands were converted and filled with the Spirit. Note how specific portions of Scripture spurred these people to persevere in prayer, just like Christ's promise to his disciples of baptism with the

Spirit. The Scripture causes us to look beyond our present experience and to yearn for the fullness God wants us to experience. This, in turn, stimulates prevailing prayer.

C). Often an individual has a burden that may not be shared by others but which triggers individual prevailing prayer. In November 1844 George Mueller began to pray for the conversion of five individuals. He says, "I prayed every day without one single intermission, whether sick or in health, on the land or on the sea, and whatever the pressure of my engagements might be." After eighteen months of such praying, the first of the five was converted. Five years later the second came, and the third after another six years. In his sermon Mueller said that he had been praying for thirty-six years for the other two, but they still remained unconverted. His biographer says that one of those two "became a Christian before Mueller's death and the other a few years later."

D). see THE BRIDGE ministry... www.Pray4StJ.com

Pray 4 St J
.com



Look... Love. Live!

LOOK

beyond your-self...

LOVE

beyond your-self.

LIVE

beyond your-self!

W
a
n
t

t
o

B
E
?



C
o
m
e
&
S
e
e
!

w w w . Pray 4 St J . c o m

Choosing leaders and making decisions in the church. We noted above that it was significant for the early church's ministering among the Jews to have exactly twelve apostles ([vv. 21-22](#)). But as the narrative of Acts proceeds, especially as it enters the phase of Gentile evangelism, the apostles receive less prominence. Only Peter, James, and John have individual roles in Acts, and none of these apostles is mentioned after chapter 15, by which time a non-apostle, James the brother of Jesus, had become leader of the church in Jerusalem. Thus, the number twelve is not intended to be a precedent to follow in church organization. This points us to the transitory nature of some of the events recorded in Acts. There is, however, "no exegetical support in any New Testament text" for the idea that the choice of Matthias to replace Judas was a mistake, and that "Paul ... was God's man for the filling of the gap." Matthias's not being mentioned again in Acts is shared with eight other apostles!

The choosing of Matthias also shows us that prayer should play a critical part in our strategy of appointing leaders. Note how Jesus spent the night in prayer before choosing his twelve apostles ([Luke 6:12-13](#)). In Luke-Acts, as Robert Stein points out, "prayer preceded every major decision or crisis in the life of Jesus and the early church." Prayer is important before making any decision because it gets us in tune with God, so that we are receptive to his voice. In Antioch, for example, it was as the church was praying (and fasting) that the Holy Spirit spoke to them about separating Saul and Barnabas to the task of missions ([13:2](#)).

Here in [1:24](#) is a clear petition for guidance ("Show us..."). Prayer had an equally important part in the process of selecting and appointing elders in the first churches that Paul and Barnabas founded ([Acts 14:23](#)). From Jesus' instructions to "ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" ([Matt. 9:38](#)), we can conclude

that prayer has an important role to play in the recruitment of mission workers.

Christian ministry is essentially spiritual in nature, and external qualifications are useless if a person's heart is not right with God.

The description of Judas's defection in [Acts 1](#) should teach us something about how to handle the pain of defection. The community that these first believers helped forge was not afraid of deep spiritual accountability, for they "were one in heart and mind" ([4:32](#)). In other words, they seemed to have overcome the blow of disappointment and developed principles of accountability. Paul too was deeply hurt by defection, apostasy, and unfaithfulness, but he kept opening his life to others and making himself vulnerable to more hurt. He felt hurt right up to the end of his ministry ([2 Tim. 4](#)), but he also helped develop many church leaders and left a huge legacy of fruitfulness when he died. Thus, learning how to overcome the hurt of betrayal is an important discipline to cultivate in the Christian life.

We must be careful in making choices of leaders. **One thing I always look for is whether the applicant has been part of a close community that practices spiritual accountability over a considerable period of time. Usually in such a fellowship one's heart is revealed, and the inability to be part of such a group may indicate a serious spiritual sickness or problem.** But these groups have been getting less common in the church today, being replaced by short-term groups that are more in

keeping with our culture but which give much less opportunity for true spiritual accountability.

- NIV Application Commentary

MATTHEW HENRY:

How they spent their time: They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. Observe,

1. They prayed, and made supplication. All God's people are praying people, and give themselves to prayer. It was now a time of trouble and danger with the disciples of Christ; they were as sheep in the midst of wolves; and, Is any afflicted? Let him pray; this will silence cares and fears. **They had new work before them, great work, and, before they entered upon it, they were instant in prayer to God for his presence with them in it. Before they were first sent forth Christ spent time in prayer for them, and now they spent time in prayer for themselves. They were waiting for the descent of the Spirit upon them, and therefore abounded thus in prayer. The Spirit descended upon our Saviour when he was praying, [Luke 3:21](#). Those are in the best frame to receive spiritual blessings that are in a praying frame.**

2. **They continued in prayer, spent much time in it, more than ordinary, prayed frequently, and were long in prayer.** They never missed an hour of prayer; they resolved to persevere herein till the Holy Ghost came, according to the promise, to pray, and not to faint. It is said ([Luke 24:53](#)), They were praising and blessing God; here, They continued in prayer and supplication; for as praise for the promise is a decent way of begging for the performance, and praise for former mercy of begging further mercy, so, in seeking to

God, we give him the glory of the mercy and grace which we have found in him.

3. They did this with one accord. This intimates that they were together in holy love, and that there was no quarrel nor discord among them; and those who so keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace are best prepared to receive the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Though but one spoke, they all prayed, and if, when two agree to ask, it shall be done for them, much more when many agree in the same petition. See [Matthew 18:19](#).

The Filling of the Vacancy Made by the Death of Judas, by Electing Matthias

[1:15-26](#)

The sin of Judas was not only his shame and ruin, but it made a vacancy in the college of the apostles. They were ordained twelve, with an eye to the twelve tribes of Israel, descended from the twelve patriarchs; they were the twelve stars that make up the church's crown ([Revelation 12:1](#)), and for them twelve thrones were designated, [Matthew 19:28](#).

Now being twelve when they were learners, **if they were but eleven when they were to be teachers, it would occasion every one to enquire what had become of the twelfth, and so revive the remembrance of the scandal of their society;**

The proposal which Peter made for the choice of another apostle. He stood up in the midst of the disciples, [v. 15](#). He did not sit down, as one that gave laws, or had any supremacy over the rest, but stood up, as one

that had only a motion to make, in which he paid a deference to his brethren, standing up when he spoke to them.

Now in his speech we may observe,

1. The account he gives of the vacancy made by the death of Judas, in which he is very particular, and, as became one that Christ had breathed upon, takes notice of the fulfilling of the scriptures in it. Here is,

(1.) The power to which Judas had been advanced ([v. 17](#)): He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry which we are invested with. Note, Many are numbered with the saints in this world that will not be found among them in the day of separation between the precious and the vile. What will it avail us to be added to the number of Christians, if we partake not of the spirit and nature of Christians? Judas's having obtained part of this ministry was but an aggravation of his sin and ruin, as it will be of theirs who prophesied in Christ's name, and yet were workers of iniquity.

(2.) The sin of Judas, notwithstanding his advancement to this honour. He was guide to those that took Jesus, not only informed Christ's persecutors where they might find him (which they might have done effectually though he had kept out of sight), but he had the impudence to appear openly at the head of the party that seized him. He went before them to the place, and, as if he had been proud of the honour, gave the word of command: That same is he, hold him fast. Note, Ringleaders in sin are the worst of sinners, especially if those that by their office should have been guides to the friends of Christ are guides to his enemies.

(3.) The ruin of Judas by this sin. Perceiving the chief priests to seek the life of Christ and his disciples, he thought to save his by going over to them, and not only so, but to get an estate under

them, of which his wages for his service, he hoped, would be but an earnest; but see what came of it.

[1.] He lost his money shamefully enough ([v. 18](#)): He purchased a field with the thirty pieces of silver, which were the reward of his iniquity. He did not purchase the field, but the wages of his unrighteousness did, and it is very elegantly expressed thus, in derision of his projects to enrich himself by this bargain. He thought to have purchased a field for himself, as Gehazi did with what he got from Naaman by a lie (see [2 Kings 5:26](#)), but it proved the purchase of a field to bury strangers in; and what was he or any of his the better for this? It was to him an unrighteous mammon, it deceived him; and the reward of his iniquity was the stumbling-block of his iniquity.

[2.] He lost his life more shamefully. We were told ([Matthew 27:5](#)) that he went away in despair, and was suffocated (so the word signifies there, and no more); here it is added (as latter historians add to those who went before) that, being strangled, or choked with grief and horror, he fell headlong, fell on his face (so Dr. Hammond), and partly with the swelling of his own breast, and partly with the violence of the fall, he burst asunder in the midst, so that all his bowels tumbled out. If, when the devil was cast out of a child, he tore him, threw him down, and rent him, and almost killed him (as we find [Mark 9:26](#); [Luke 9:42](#)), no wonder if, when he had full possession of Judas, he threw him headlong, and burst him. The suffocation of him, which Matthew relates, would make him swell till he burst, which Peter relates. he burst asunder with a great noise (so Dr. Edwards), which was heard by the neighbours, and so, as it follows, it came to be known ([v. 19](#)): His bowels gushed out; Luke writes like a physician, understanding all the entrails of the middle and lower ventricle. Bowelling is part of the punishment of traitors. Justly do those bowels gush out that were shut up against the Lord Jesus. And perhaps Christ had an eye to the fate of Judas, when he said of

the wicked servant that he would cut him in sunder, [Matthew 24:51](#).

(4.) The public notice that was taken of this: It was known to all the dwellers in Jerusalem. It was, as it were, put into the newspapers, and was all the talk of the town, as a remarkable judgment of God upon him that betrayed his Master, [v. 19](#). It was not only discoursed of among the disciples, but it was in every body's mouth, and nobody disputed the truth of the fact. It was known, that is, it was known to be true, incontestably so. Now one would think this should have awakened those to repentance that had had any hand in the death of Christ when they saw him that had the first hand thus made an example. But their hearts were hardened, and, as to those of them that were to be softened, it must be done by the word, and the Spirit working with it. Here is one proof of the notoriety of the thing mentioned, that the field which was purchased with Judas's money was called Aceldama—the field of blood, because it was bought with the price of blood, which perpetuated the infamy not only of him that sold that innocent precious blood, but of those that bought it too. Look how they will answer it, when God shall make inquisition for blood.

(5.) The fulfilling of the scriptures in this, which had spoken so plainly of it, that it must needs be fulfilled, [v. 16](#). Let none be surprised nor stumble at it, that this should be the exit of one of the twelve, for David had not only foretold his sin (which Christ had taken notice of, [John 13:18](#), from [Psa. 41:9](#), He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up the heel against me), but had also foretold,

[1.] His punishment ([Psa. 69:25](#)): Let his habitation be desolate. This Psalm refers to the Messiah. Mention is made but two or three verses before of their giving him gall and vinegar, and therefore the following predictions of the destruction of David's enemies must be applied to the enemies of Christ, and particularly to Judas. Perhaps he had some habitation of his own at Jerusalem, which, upon this, every body was afraid to live in, and so it became desolate. This

prediction signifies the same with that of Bildad concerning the wicked man, that his confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and shall bring him to the king of terrors: it shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his; brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation, [Job 18:14, 15](#).

[2.] The substitution of another in his room. His bishopric, or his office (for so the word signifies in general) shall another take, which is quoted from [Psa. 109:8](#). With this quotation Peter very aptly introduces the following proposal. Note, We are not to think the worse of any office that God has instituted (whether magistracy or ministry) either for the wickedness of any that are in that office or for the ignominious punishment of that wickedness; nor will God suffer any purpose of his to be frustrated, any commission of his to be vacated, or any work of his to be undone, for the miscarriages of those that are entrusted therewith. The unbelief of man shall not make the promise of God of no effect. Judas is hanged, but his bishopric is not lost. It is said of his habitation, that no man shall dwell therein, there he shall have no heir; but it is not said so of his bishopric, there he shall not want a successor. It is with the officers of the church as with the members of it, if the natural branches be broken off, others shall be grafted in, [Romans 11:17](#). Christ's cause shall never be lost for want of witnesses.

The nomination of the person that was to succeed Judas in his office as an apostle.

1. Two, who were known to have been Christ's constant attendants, and men of great integrity, were set up as candidates for the place ([v. 23](#)): They appointed two; not the eleven, they did not take upon them to determine who should be put up, but the hundred

and twenty, for to them Peter spoke, and not to the eleven. The two they nominated were Joseph and Matthias, of neither of whom do we read elsewhere, except this Joseph be the same with that Jesus who is called Justus, of whom Paul speaks ([Colossians 4:11](#)), and who is said to be of the circumcision, a native Jew, as this was, and who was a fellow-worker with Paul in the kingdom of God and a comfort to him; and then it is observable that, though he came short of being an apostle, he did not therefore quit the ministry, but was very useful in a lower station; for, Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Some think this Joseph is he that is called Joses ([Mark 6:3](#)), the brother of James the less ([Mark 15:40](#)), and was called Joses the just, as he was called James the just. Some confound this with that Joses mentioned [Acts 4:36](#). But that was of Cyprus, this of Galilee; and, it should seem, to distinguish them, that was called Barnabas-a son of consolation; this Barsabas-a son of the oath. These two were both of them such worthy men, and so well qualified for the office, that they could not tell which of them was the fitter, but all agreed it must be one of these two. They did not propose themselves nor strive for the place, but humbly sat still, and were appointed to it.

2. They applied to God by prayer for direction, not which of the seventy, for none of the rest could stand in competition with these in the opinion of all present, but which of these two? [v. 24,25](#).

(1.) They appeal to God as the searcher of hearts: "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, which we do not, and better than they know their own." Observe, When an apostle was to be chosen, he must be chosen by his heart, and the temper and disposition of that. Yet Jesus, who knew all men's hearts, for wise and holy ends chose Judas to be one of the twelve. It is comfortable to us, in our prayers for the welfare of the church and its ministers, that the God to whom we pray knows the hearts of all men, and has them not only under his eye, but in his hand, and turns them which way soever he will, can make them fit for his purpose, if he do not find them so, by giving them another spirit.

(2.) They desire to know which of these God had chosen: Lord, show us this, and we are satisfied. It is fit that God should choose his own servants; and so far as he in any way by the disposals of his providence or the gifts of his Spirit, shows whom he hath chosen, or what he hath chosen, for us, we ought to comply with him.

(3.) They are ready to receive him as a brother whom God hath chosen; for they are not contriving to have so much the more dignity themselves, by keeping out another, but desire to have one to take part of this ministry and apostleship, to join with them in the work and share with them in the honour, from which Judas by transgression fell, threw himself, by deserting and betraying his Master, from the place of an apostle, of which he was unworthy, that he might go to his own place, the place of a traitor, the fittest place for him, not only to the gibbet, but to hell-this was his own place. Note, Those that betray Christ, as they fall from the dignity of relation to him, so they fall into all misery. It is said of Balaam ([Numbers 24:25](#)) that he went to his own place, that is, says one of the rabbin, he went to hell. Dr. Whitby quotes Ignatius saying, There is appointed to every man *idios topos*-a proper place, which imports the same with that of God's rendering to every man according to his works. And our Saviour had said that Judas's own place should be such that it had been better for him that he had never been born ([Matthew 26:24](#)) -his misery such as to be worse than not being. Judas had been a hypocrite, and hell is the proper place of such; other sinners, as inmates, have their portion with them, [Matthew 24:51](#).

(4.) The doubt was determined by lot ([v. 26](#)), which is an appeal to God, and lawful to be used for determining matters not otherwise determinable, provided it be done in a solemn religious manner, and with prayer, the prayer of faith; for the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord, [Proverbs 16:33](#). Matthias was not ordained by the imposition of hands, as presbyters were, for he was chosen by lot, which was the act of God; and therefore, as he must be baptized, so he must be

ordained, by the Holy Ghost, as they all were not many days after. Thus the number of the apostles was made up, as afterwards, when James, another of the twelve, was martyred, Paul was made an apostle.

- Matthew Henry's Commentary

All those gathered in the upper room **with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer. With one mind** expresses the spiritual unity that characterized the early fellowship. **Continually devoting** is a strong expression, denoting persistence in prayer. Contrary to the view of some, they were not praying for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. They had not been told to pray for that but to wait for it, and they knew it was coming soon. The coming of the Spirit did not require or depend on their prayers but on God's promise (see the discussion of [Acts 2:1-13](#) in [chapter 3](#)). They were praying because they were physically separated from the ascended Jesus, and prayer was their only means of communicating with Him. They may have been asking Him to return soon and in the meantime to grant them all they would need to be faithful. This was the beginning of the pattern of prayer offered in the name of Jesus (cf. [John 14:13-14](#)) and thus marks another of the many historical transitions found in the book of Acts.

The 120 gathered in the upper room were small in number but had counted the cost and were willing to take up the cross and follow their Lord. They believed in Him fully. From this modest beginning, Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire in an amazingly short time span. In spite of repeated attempts to stamp out the movement, it

eventually prevailed and became the dominant force in Western culture for nearly two thousand years.

Instead of launching out on their own, they patiently, submissively waited for the promised Holy Spirit to come and give them the power they needed. Subsequent history testifies to the impact of that patience.

Peter characterized the Scripture he was about to quote as that which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David. **No clearer description of inspiration can be found anywhere in Scripture. The Bible was written when "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21).**

Peter reassured his hearers that despite Judas's treachery in acting as a guide to those who arrested Jesus, God's word was being fulfilled. Judas's betrayal was, in fact, crucial to the plan of the Sovereign who predicted it in the Old Testament.

Judas represents the greatest example of wasted opportunity in all of history.

He had the rare privilege, given to only twelve men, of living and ministering with Jesus Christ, God incarnate, for more than three years. He had the same convincing, overwhelming opportunity to come to faith in Him as the eleven did. Yet his motives for following Jesus were never anything but selfish. He no doubt shared the common Jewish hope that Messiah would deliver the nation from the yoke of the hated Romans. When it became obvious that was not Jesus' plan, and he would not get the wealth and power he wanted, Judas decided to cut his losses and get out with whatever he could salvage. Betraying the incarnate Son of God

to the authorities for a paltry sum seemed a way to gain some compensation. The greed he evidenced by that act was another indicator of his wicked heart. There had been a preview of this avarice when, after Jesus' anointing with costly perfume by Mary, Judas indignantly exclaimed, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?" (John 12:5). His real concern was evident from John's cutting editorial comment in verse 6: "Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it." Driven by disappointment and greed, this most tragic of all men squandered inestimable privilege, betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and damned his soul to hell.

Judas's tragic life reached a damning climax in his suicide. In a parenthetical statement for Theophilus's benefit and ours, Luke describes the scene: **Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.** Judas did not, of course, actually purchase the field in question. But because it was purchased with the money paid to him by the Jewish leaders, Luke refers to Judas as the buyer. Feeling unbearable guilt and remorse (but not genuine repentance) for his betrayal of the innocent Lord, he returned the money he had received to the Jewish authorities ([Matt. 27:3-8](#)). They hypocritically refused to keep it, because it was blood money. Instead, **with the price of his wickedness**, the legalistic, but spiritually dead, leaders **acquired a field**, which those **living in Jerusalem** named **Hakeldama (Field of Blood)** since it was purchased with blood money.

Judas, overwhelmed by his accusing conscience, committed suicide. Matthew records that he hanged himself ([Matt. 27:5](#)), whereas Luke here records that **falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his**

bowels gushed out. Luke's account supplements Matthew's and does not contradict it. Evidently the tree Judas chose overlooked a cliff. Either the rope or the branch broke, or his knot failed to hold under the weight of his body. He then plunged to a gruesome death on the rocks below. The imagined scene is depicted in a relief on a medieval cathedral, in which demons are shown pulling on Judas's legs to hasten his death.

As already noted, Judas's tortured life and death did fulfill Old Testament prophecy. As Peter indicates, **Judas's treachery in betrayal, his death, and his replacement were foretold by David in the Psalms. Psalm 55:12-15 clearly predicts the betrayal. Psalm 69:25 is the source of the prediction of his removal from office: Let his homestead be made desolate, and let no man dwell in it. Psalm 109:8 promises his replacement: His office let another man take.**

All those quotes are in contexts that point to the time of Messiah's death, and the Holy Spirit clearly affirms that they speak of Judas. Peter is using the most compelling proof, Scripture, to reassure his hearers that Judas's defection, and their choice of his replacement, were all part of God's plan.

Jesus Christ chose Matthias just as surely as He chose the other eleven. And while Paul was in no way inferior to the twelve, he was not one of their number. By his own testimony he was "in no respect... inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody" ([2 Cor. 12:11](#)). He was a unique apostle. The mission of the twelve was primarily to the nation of Israel, while he was the apostle sent to the Gentiles ([Rom. 11:13](#)).

Two men met those requirements: **Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.** Nothing is known of either individual; they appear nowhere else in Scripture. Knowing that the third qualification for an apostle was to be chosen by the Lord, those gathered **prayed, and said, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two Thou hast chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place."** The last phrase is a shocking and sobering statement. Judas, and all others who go to hell, belong there; it is the **place** of their **own** choosing. It belongs to them, and they to it!

The fact that they prayed for the Lord to choose Judas's replacement offers further proof that the choice of Matthias was no mistake. The Lord could have answered their prayers by telling them to wait, then added Paul to the ranks of the twelve, if that had been His plan.

After praying, **they drew lots for them**—an accepted Old Testament method for determining God's will. [Proverbs 16:33](#) says, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (cf. [Lev. 16:8ff.](#); [Num. 26:55ff.](#); [Josh. 7:14](#); [1 Sam. 10:20](#); [14:41ff.](#); [Prov. 18:18](#)). That is the last occurrence in Scripture of this practice, since the coming of the Spirit rendered it unnecessary. The Lord made His choice, **the lot fell to Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.** The name **Matthias** means "gift of God," and so he was to the apostles and the church.

With Matthias's selection to replace the traitor Judas, the final preparation for the church was completed; the final resource provided. All was now ready for the birth of the church on the Day of Pentecost.

- **MacArthur New Testament Commentary**

How easy it would have been for someone to bring division into this beautiful assembly of humble people! The members of the Lord's family might have claimed special recognition, or Peter could have been criticized for his cowardly denial of the Saviour. Or perhaps Peter might have blamed John, because it was John who brought him into the high priest's house ([John 18:15-16](#)). John might well have reminded the others that *he* had faithfully stood at the cross, and had even been chosen by the Saviour to care for His mother. But there was none of this. In fact, nobody was even arguing over who among them was the greatest!

The key phrase is "with one accord," a phrase that is found six times in Acts ([1:14](#); [2:1, 46](#); [4:24](#); [5:12](#); [15:25](#); and note also [2:44](#)). There was among these believers a wonderful unity that bound them together in Christ ([Ps. 133](#); [Gal. 3:28](#)), the kind of unity that Christians need today. "I do not want the walls of separation between different orders of Christians to be destroyed," said the godly British preacher Rowland Hill, "but only lowered, that we may shake hands a little easier over them!"

It is not enough for Christians to have faith in the Lord; they must also have faith in one another. To these 120 people ([Acts 1:15](#)) the Lord had given the solemn responsibility of bearing witness to a lost world, and none of them could do the job alone. They would experience severe persecution in the days ahead,

- Bible Exposition Commentary

01-16-2015

*I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" — **Isaiah 6:8***

- Oswald chambers devotional

When we talk about the call of God, we often forget the most important thing, namely, the nature of Him who calls. There are many things calling each of us today. Some of these calls will be answered, and others will not even be heard. The call is the expression of the nature of the One who calls, and we can only recognize the call if that same nature is in us. The call of God is the expression of God's nature, not ours. God providentially weaves the threads of His call through our lives, and only we can distinguish them. It is the threading of God's voice directly to us over a certain concern, and it is useless to seek another person's opinion of it. Our dealings over the call of God should be kept exclusively between ourselves and Him.

The call of God is not a reflection of my nature; my personal desires and temperament are of no consideration. As long as I dwell on my own qualities and traits and think about what I am suited for, I will never hear the call of God. But when God brings me into the right relationship with Himself, I will be in the same condition Isaiah was. Isaiah was so attuned to God, because of the great crisis he had just endured, that the call of God penetrated his soul. The majority of us cannot hear anything but ourselves. And we cannot hear anything God says. But to be brought to the place where we can hear the call of God is to be profoundly changed.