

## “LIFE’S IMPORTANT CHOICES”

Or, How to Choose an Apostle

Acts 1:15-26

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### INTRODUCTION

While the disciples were tarrying for the Spirit, other important business was being transacted also.

- Please note that they were “all together” (Gk=“in the same”; can also mean in the same place).
- They are “brethren”—common bond in Christ.
- Peter stood “in the midst”.

**All of this stresses \_\_\_\_\_.**

Peter is still their *leader* and *spokesman*. Yet, he addresses the entire congregation.

The apostles did not make arbitrary choices apart from the people. Neither should we!

They have a difficult problem to address; one of their own had betrayed Jesus (v. 17).

- He was “numbered with us” (cf. v. 26—Matthias was “chosen together with them.”)
- He had “a portion in this ministry” (lit. “received by lot; cf. word “clergy”); see v. 26 where Matthias was “chosen by lot.”)
- Judas had a “ministry”—διακονία--see v. 25 where Matthias “took the place of this ministry.”

Now, what are they to do? They must look to the \_\_\_\_\_—the Scriptures in order to find clear direction. There are **two necessities in relation to the prophetic scripture:**

**THE NECESSITY OF FULFILLMENT**

**THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE**

Although we are not living in that time and cannot be part of the fulfillment of prophetic Scripture, we can and must be involved in the \_\_\_\_\_ **to Scripture.**

### I. THE NECESSITY OF SCRIPTURE BEING FULFILLED (16-20)

Compare Luke 24:44-46—Jesus here taught Peter how to understand and apply Scripture.

John 17:12 shows us that Judas’ betrayal was a necessity in order to fulfill Scripture.

John 13:18-19 again shows Judas’ betrayal to be a necessity—fulfilling Ps. 41:9.

**Judas’ betrayal is no \_\_\_\_\_ to God!**

#### A. Origin of Scripture (16)

II Pet. 1:21

David is the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit—Acts 4:25 and here.

#### B. Content of Scripture (20) (David is a Messianic type—his enemies and Jesus’ enemy.)

1. Removal of the Psalmist’s enemy (Ps. 69:25)

2. Replacement by another (Ps. 109:8)

### C. Judas' fulfillment of Scripture (16b, 18-19)

#### 1. Guide to the arrestors of Jesus

**Notice that it was his apostasy, not his \_\_\_\_\_, that demanded replacement.** Compare James in Acts 12—not replaced.

#### 2. Purchasing a field (18a)

Who purchased it? See Mt. 27:6-8.

He had his “portion” in the ministry; now look at what he got in return.

Used the “price of unrighteousness” to make the purchase (v. 18) (cf.

Balaam in II Pet. 2:15).

#### 3. Suicide (18b)

How did he die? (cf. Mt. 27:5—hung himself)

#### 4. Developed tradition (19)

- All living in Jerusalem knew about the incident.
- The meaning of Hakeldamach—“field of blood”—both Judas' blood and the fact that the money used for the purchase was “blood money.”

#### 5. His end (25b)—went “to his own place”—unique and fitting for him.

He was lost, but God gave him the destiny he deserved! **So with you!**

*In all of this we see the **divine necessity** of the Scriptures being fulfilled.*

**Now we see the second necessity in the present:**

## II. THE NECESSITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ SCRIPTURE (21-26)

Why another apostle?

### A. Selection of Qualified Replacements (21-23)

#### 1. Qualifications (21-22)

a. Present during Jesus' earthly ministry (21-22a) [John's baptism is the starting point—cf. 10:37; 13:24-25. and Mark's Gospel; Jesus' ascension is the ending point—“until the day that He was taken up from us”.]

b. Witness of Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ (Cf. I Cor. 9:1; 15:8-9). This became the **prominent element in the early preaching**.

c. Spiritual Qualifications (implied in v. 24—The Lord “knows the \_\_\_\_\_ of all men.” The Spirit bore witness also in their character and deeds.)

#### 2. Qualified Persons (23)

Only two met these qualifications; these then were not really chosen by the apostles nor by the congregation, but by \_\_\_\_\_ Himself.

a. Joseph Barsabbas (“son of Sabbath”) [cf. Judas Barsabbas (15:22)

Cf. “Joseph”, Mary's husband; Joseph Barnabas (4:36); Joseph of Arimathea. Also called Justus—“the righteous” (cf. “Jesus called Justus, Col. 4:11)

b. Matthias

### B. Discerning God's Choice (24-26)

#### 1. Prayer—**the first recorded public prayer of the church**

#### 2. Recognizing God's \_\_\_\_\_ (His choice)

**Lord** here = the Lord Jesus: Praying to \_\_\_\_\_ already!

- “You have chosen” reflects v. 2—His choosing of the 12.
- These men were used to appealing to Jesus; He also told them how to pray once He was gone.
- They were conscious of His presence.
- Peter in v. 21 had just called Him “Lord”.
- The facts that He “knows the hearts of men” (v. 24) reflects similar statements in the Gospel of John (2:25; 21:17).

The disciples here simply needed to know His will—would He please “make plain” (“show”) which of the two men was His choice.

3. Accepting God’s Program (25a)—“ministry and apostleship” (v. 25)

*Note that “ministry” is first in priority.*

4. Finding God’s direction (26a)—Prov. 16:33

**Question: Was this a spiritual method accepted by God here?**

- We have much OT precedent: choice of the “scapegoat”, the use of the Urim and Thummim, the division of the land to the tribes, etc.
- But, we have no other NT example of this method being used once the Holy Spirit came.
- We must remember that this was still the transitional time between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

*Some commentators say here that this was a hasty action by the apostles; they lacked reliance on the Holy Spirit; Paul was really the intended replacement apostle; we never hear of Matthias again in the NT.*

**These are some pretty formidable arguments, but:**

- The Bible never criticizes this choice.
- If it was wrong, Peter misused Old Testament prophecy here.
- Others besides Paul are called “apostles” in the NT (cf. 14:4, 14).
- Paul had a unique ministry to the Gentiles.
- There is silence in the rest of the NT about most of the apostles, and we do not question their legitimacy.

5. Obeying God’s Direction (26b)—Matthias was “numbered with” the eleven.

## CONCLUSION

God’s Word is certain of fulfillment; yet we are responsible to obey its precepts and duties.

Those who rebel still fulfill it (Judas), but look at His end!