



Session 5 | Acts 1:15-26 | The Apostles Replace Judas

Acts 1:15 | Introduction of Peter

Verse 15—

And in those days. The days in which Jesus commanded them to wait in Jerusalem (1:4), the period of time from the Ascension to the receiving of the promise of the Holy Ghost (2:4). **Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples.** The focus of Luke's Acts narrative concentrates on the apostle Peter. We are going to see Peter as the main spokesman for the apostles (Luke 8:45; 9:20, 33; 12:41; 18:28; Acts 1:15; 2:14; for similar character, cf. Luke 22:54; 24:12; Mark 1:36; 8:29, 32; 9:5; 10:28; 11:21; 14:29, 31.)¹

Peter seems to have an influential position within the circle of disciples, although there were times he was not seen in a positive light (A familiar example: Luke 22:34; 58-61). Jesus had promised that Peter would take a lead role—Luke 22:31,32 where Jesus told him “strengthen thy brethren.” After his resurrection, Jesus also especially appeared to **Peter** (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5). We see Peter's character develop over time. Also called, Simon (or Simeon) was his original name, Cephas (Aramaic), and Petros (Greek). He was the son of Jonas (or John), and brother of Andrew. Peter was given the Keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mt.16:19). When Christ was on earth the kingdom was in an imminent state of nearness. But Christ must have first departed and then returned. Peter would use the keys to open the kingdom for Israel on the day of Pentecost and the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10).

Number of names together were about an hundred and twenty. That is, in the upper room together with the apostles.

Acts 1:16-22 | Peter's First Speech

Verse 16, 17—

Men and brethren that is apostles and everyone else. **This scripture...the Holy Ghost by...David spake concerning Judas.** That the Messiah (Jesus) would come was no secret. The Holy Spirit testified about Jesus through the prophets, in this case David. Peter could have several Scriptures in mind (Psalm 41:9; cf. John 13:18; Psalm 69:25; and Psalm 109:8). **Which was guide to them that took Jesus,** Matt. 26:47; Mark 14:43; Luke 22:47; John 18:3.

He was numbered with us. The word **numbered** in the Greek carries the idea of a final fixed number, that is, he was one of us. Judas was one of the 12, and had **obtained part of this ministry.** The disciples were a part of the inner circle of Jesus.

Verse 18, 19, 20—

The next three verses are parenthetical:

Now this man (Judas) purchased a field with the reward of iniquity. This appears to contradict Matthew 27:3-7 where it says the chief priests *took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field...* Did Judas purchase the field? Or did the chief priests? Solution could be 1) These were two different purchases of two properties. Judas was a thief (John 12:6). Could he have stolen money, bought a field and later *hanged himself*. The chief priests bought a different field for a different purpose? Or, 2) Luke is merely using a figure of speech. In that Judas threw down the money at the chief priest's feet—they took *his* money and bought the field that he

¹ Keener, Craig S. [Acts: An Exegetical Commentary & 2: Introduction and 1:1-14:28](#). Vol. 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012-2013. Print.



would die in. In other words, while Judas himself didn't personally buy the field, in essence *he did buy it* via the chief priests. The money whether he wanted to or not. There are ways to rectify the discrepancy, but the bottom line is Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death."

Known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem. The word of the death of Judas travelled quickly, as shocking news does. The **field of blood** maybe means the people were saying *he got what was coming to him or you reap what you sow*. We have a saying, *his blood is on his own hands*.

Peter quotes two verses from the Psalms, 69:25; 109:8. Both Psalms deal with deliverance from enemies and praying for the wicked to lose what they have owned. Judas made an exchange; his office, **bishoprick**, for the land he would never possess alive. His office as one of the 12 is vacant, as the land he possessed. The word **bishoprick** is the Greek word *episcopo* is the same word used in 1 Timothy 3:1, "If a man desire the *office of a bishop*."

Verse 21, 22--

Of these men There were other disciples who followed Jesus other than the inner circle of 12 (as we noted in verse 15). Of this group a replacement for Judas will be found. Luke gives the qualifications for his replacement. **Men which have companied with us all the time; from the baptism of John, unto the same day he was taken up** (the Ascension), and **witness with us of his resurrection**.

Ordained. The word would be better translated *become*, as the New King James does with **one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection**. Why were 12 apostles necessary? Because the 12 apostles will, in the Kingdom, judge the nation of Israel. Jesus made that prophecy in Luke 22:30. With Judas disqualified, a replacement had to be found.

Verse 23—

Two men qualified to be appointed. **Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias**. Only one was needed.

Verses 24,25—

And they prayed. They began their deliberation with prayer. **Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men**. Notice how they affirm one of the great attributes of God, his omniscience. The eleven apostles were of one mind to find a replacement. **That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship**.

Verse 26—

And they gave forth their lots. The word **lots** is from the Greek word, *kleros*, which comes from the root word, break. So, the idea is breaking pieces of wood (or drawing straws). The casting of **lots** was not a vote. Israel used the casting of **lots** in order to receive a "yes" or "no" answer from God. The Jewish people believed **lots** would give them divine direction. Israel divided some of the land by **lots** and it is seen often in the book of Joshua among other places (Joshua 14:2; 18:6, 8, 19; Ezekiel 45:1). Other decisions and duties, for example, of the priestly duties, choosing of cities for the Levites, etc., were determined by **lots** (1 Chronicles 24:5,31; 25:8; 26:13-14; Luke 1:9; 1 Chronicles 6:61-65; Nehemiah 11:1).

I don't know of any church today that makes decisions by casting lots. It was, however, very much an Old Testament practice. The apostles lived in a different dispensation (A dispensation is a period of time in which God works in specific ways with specific people). The apostles and those in the early first century did not have the New Testament to guide them. In the dispensation of grace, we are guided by God's word, in particular the epistles of Paul which give us instruction for Christian living. In our dispensation of grace does not elect politicians today, nor does he make every decision for us. With God's word, we have enough information of guide us in making all decisions, including personal and political.

