

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas



Ice-Breaker

What was your favorite board game as a child? Did it involve luck of the draw, taking risks or strategy? Which is your favorite game now, and why?



Scripture Passage

Acts 1:12-26

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk^a from the city. ¹³When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers^b (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ¹⁶and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus-- ¹⁷he was one of our number and shared in this ministry."

¹⁸(With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

²⁰"For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms,

"`May his place be deserted;

let there be no one to dwell in it,'^c

and,

"`May another take his place of leadership.'^d

²¹Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

²³So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." ²⁶Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

a [12] That is, about 3/4 mile (about 1,100 meters)

b [15] Greek brothers

c [20] Psalm 69:25

d [20] Psalm 109:8



Bible Study

1. Who was present at this meeting? From Mark 3:20-21,31-35 and John 7:1-5, how do you account for this change in Jesus' "family"? Why weren't "the women" mentioned by name?

2. In light of Peter's denial of Jesus, how might the others feel about his leadership? How would the events of John 21:15-19 calm any fears they have?

3. Given verses 6-8, how would you be praying if you were in this group? What emotions would you express?

4. What was the role of Scripture, prayer, discussion, qualifications, and trust in God when the disciples selected a replacement for Judas?

Reference Notes

1:12 The Mount of Olives, where the Ascension occurred, was just outside of the city. The angels' message picks up on Zechariah 14:4 which teaches that the Messiah will one day appear on that mountain when he comes to fully establish his reign.

1:14 *Mary ... and ... his brothers.* Prior to the Resurrection, Jesus' brothers had not believed in him (Mark 3:21; John 7:5). One of his brothers, James, was to become a leader of the Jerusalem church and the author of the New Testament book by that name.

1:15 *a hundred and twenty.* Jewish law required that there be at least 120 men before a new community with its own council could be formed.

1:16 After the Resurrection, Jesus had showed the apostles how the Old Testament pointed to him (Luke 24:27,44). The apostles then studied the Law and the prophets looking for other pointers that would help them understand him and their mission all the more.

1:18-19 The parenthetical insertion about Judas' death differs considerably from the account in Matthew 27:3-10. It may be that he hanged himself after which the rope broke allowing his body to crash on the ground. The field, bought with his money, may have come to be known as belonging to him.

1:20 The passages Peter quotes to justify the action of replacing Judas are Psalms 69:25 and 109:8. That these passages were seen as referring to Judas shows how deeply the apostles looked for possible allusions to Jesus in the Old Testament.

1:21 *it is necessary to choose.* This necessity was determined both by the desire to fulfill the Scripture just quoted, and to have twelve disciples, the number of the tribes of Israel.

1:22 *from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us.* Since the apostles were to bear witness to all Jesus said and did, it was important that they all be people who were involved from the very beginning.

1:23 *Joseph called Barsabbas ... Matthias.* Because nothing is known of these men, some people believe this process was a mistake in that God already had a new "twelfth apostle" in mind; Paul. However, there is no indication in the passage that God was not involved in this process. Of all the original twelve apostles, only Peter, James and John are mentioned outside of the Gospels and Acts 1:13.

1:24 *you know everyone's heart.* Such knowledge is clearly a divine attribute (1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 17:10) which, according to John 2:25, Jesus shares.

1:25 *to go where he belongs.* A euphemism to describe the fate of judgment.

1:26 *they cast lots.* "... all the offices and duties in the Temple were settled by lot ... the names of

the candidates were written on stones; the stones were put into a vessel and the vessel was shaken until one stone fell out; and whose name was on the first stone to fall out was elected to office" (Barclay). In this way, the foundation for the new Israel was made complete.

Caring Time

1. What have been your best experiences in group prayer? How is praying with others for a common mission (one that is beyond your natural ability) different from private prayer about your individual concerns?
2. How does the pattern of decision-making here compare with the way you, your family or your church make important decisions? Which of the ingredients listed here do you need to utilize more?