

In the previous passage Jesus had told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was the power they needed to be witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. Then Jesus ascended into the clouds and vanished from their sight. Two angels were present and asked the men why they kept staring into the sky. They proclaimed that Jesus would return in the same way that He left (Acts 1:6-11). We pick up today's passage from that point.

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. Acts 1:12 A Sabbath day's journey is 2000 cubits or just under three quarters of a mile. Olivet is within that distance. I showed you a picture of the shrine on that site. The disciples are going to do just as Jesus asked, probably with quite a bit of anticipation. The promise in the Old Testament of the outpouring of the Spirit included the transformation of the heart and guidance for living as instruments of God (Ezekiel 11:19-20). They knew they needed this power. They had denied Jesus before the crucifixion. They weren't there on the third morning expecting Jesus' prediction of resurrection. They needed power from God to be faithful.

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.

14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. Acts 1:13-14 The upper room, now referred to as the Cenacle, had to be quite large to accommodate 120 people. This was also the place of the Last Supper. It was apparently the home of a wealthy sponsor sympathetic to Jesus and His followers. The traditional site which may have been built over the original location was erected in the 12th or 13th centuries. It is now in the hands of Muslims. It is a 36 by 21 feet second story room. I've been in it when there were almost that many people present. On one of our trips we were entering the Cenacle when we met a church of black brothers and sisters from the USA. They were coming out as we were going in. All of the sudden we were praising the Lord together and exchanging hugs because we knew we were both there for the same reason, to remember this very special occasion.

The eleven disciples were present. The names don't always align with the names in the Gospels because some of the disciples were known by two different names (Matthew 10:2-4). The women that Luke mentioned who went to the tomb were there (Luke 24:10), along with Jesus' mother and brothers and sisters. The Greek word for "brothers" at the end of verse 14 can be translated "siblings." Mark 6:3 is the only passage that names Mary's sons and mentions her daughters. There was an earlier time when the brothers thought Jesus needed to be reined in. John 7:5 tells us they didn't believe in Him. You would think Jesus' character and miracles would have been enough, along with Mary's testimony. It took the resurrection to finally change them. I would imagine that seeing their brother resurrected was pretty convincing proof that everything He claimed was really true. Jesus' brother, or we should say half-brother,

Commented [PW1]: Acts 1:6-11 (ESV)

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.
⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.
¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,
¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Commented [PW2]: Ezekiel 11:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,
²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Commented [PW3]: Matthew 10:2-4 (ESV)

² The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;
³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus;
⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Commented [PW4]: Luke 24:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles,

Commented [PW5]: Mark 6:3 (ESV)

³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him.

Commented [PW6]: John 7:5 (ESV)

⁵ For not even his brothers believed in him.

James, would go on to lead the early church in Jerusalem. Jude, also known as Judas, would become the author of a New Testament book by his name.

These 120 people were in one accord. That means they were united in seeking the Lord for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Their hearts were preparing to be instruments of God, empowered to be witnesses of the resurrection, and emboldened to face the inevitable persecution that would come. They devoted themselves to prayer, spending that week before Pentecost earnestly praying. These include the same men who had trouble praying for one hour with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:40-41). Most of us have trouble praying for one hour. The miraculous ascension and the Great Commission with its promise of power had made their hearts united and focused in prayer. Devotion to prayer precedes revival.

The Apostle Paul tells us to devote ourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful (Colossians 4:2). I'm not one to recommend time requirements on prayer, but I have found that when you take an hour or two to pray, you find a deeper place of prayer. Prayer is not only laying our requests before God, but allowing God to speak to our hearts and give us correction and direction. We need to learn to listen. God gave us one mouth and two ears, perhaps to show us the proportional use of each. Most importantly, we should not be hurried, watching the clock. That may mean necessarily getting up earlier in the morning, which means going to bed earlier. I don't think this devotion to prayer ended when the Spirit indwelt them. We find them devoted to prayer at the end of the next chapter (Acts 2:42). When threatened by the Sanhedrin they prayed for boldness (Acts 4:24). When Peter was imprisoned they were found praying through the night (Acts 12:12). Unity and prayer describe the condition of those who God filled with the Spirit then and those since then.

¹⁵ In 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. Acts 1:15-16 The last portion of this passage I will share from what is probably a different perspective than you have heard before. The issue is whether or not Peter was led by God in appointing someone to take Judas' place. He claims the Scripture is commanding him to do so, and we'll examine those passages he quotes. Jesus' instruction to the disciples was to wait until the promise of the Father came upon them (Acts 1:4-5). He didn't tell them to do anything but wait. What is Peter doing deciding to replace Judas? Is the Word really directing him to do so? Perhaps that is the case, but I'd like us to look at the possibility that Peter is taking things into his own hands instead of waiting on the Lord as he was directed to do.

¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." Acts 1:17 Jesus chose Judas, the only disciple not from Galilee. He was trusted to be the treasurer, but betrayed Jesus for money. Some people think he repented and could have been saved, but Jesus clearly says that he was lost (John 17:12), and the psalm Peter refers to indicates he was eternally lost (Psalm 69:27-28). There was something about the number twelve that had to be maintained. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus told the disciples that they will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The

Commented [PW7]: Matthew 26:40-41 (ESV)

⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour?"

⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Commented [PW8]: Colossians 4:2 (NIV)

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Commented [PW9]: Acts 4:24 (ESV)

²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,

Commented [PW10]: Acts 12:12 (ESV)

¹² When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

Commented [PW11]: Acts 1:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Commented [PW12]: John 17:12 (ESV)

¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Commented [PW13]: Psalm 69:27-28 (ESV)

²⁷ Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you.

²⁸ Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

Commented [PW14]: Matthew 19:28 (ESV)

²⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

reason to replace Judas was not his death, but his apostasy. No effort is made to replace James when he is executed. Further, Revelation 21:14 tells us that the foundation of the heavenly city has the names of the twelve apostles. There are only twelve apostles who were designated as witnesses of the resurrection who will sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel and whose names are on the foundation of the heavenly city, New Jerusalem.

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. Acts 1:18 This account at first glance does not seem to match the Matthew 27 account. In Matthew, Judas is remorseful for the betrayal of Jesus, gives the betrayal money back to the chief priests, and hangs himself. The priests then buy the field as a graveyard for the poor. As always, when there appears to be a contradiction, it is more helpful to see how the differences can be resolved. In our passage today Judas buys the field and dies from a fall. Church leaders as far back as Augustine have suggested a solution. When Judas returned the money, the Jewish leaders bought the potter's field in Judas' name. Judas decided to show his remorse by hanging himself on the property. The rope or limb broke and he landed on rocks below. The priests took ownership of the property and turned it into a graveyard for the poor.

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.) Acts 1:19 One of our Muslim drivers in Israel was from a family that had lived in the Akeldama valley for the past 600 years. I asked if it was possible that his ancestors were Jewish or even Christian. He said they prefer not to talk about that. The present day Akeldama valley is probably not the same as it was in the first century, as archeologists have found tombs of the first century priests there, including that of Annas.

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." Acts 1:20 After His resurrection, Jesus had explained to the disciples how the psalms were about Him. David, as a forerunner of Christ, had many experiences that foreshadowed what Jesus would go through (Luke 24:44). After being taught by Jesus about the psalms, they began to read the psalms as ultimately referring to Jesus. The language the Holy Spirit used in inspiring many of the psalms would apply in detail to things in the life of Jesus. Psalm 69 is referred to in the Gospels as being about Jesus (John 15:25; Matthew 27:34). I have a series of nine sermons on-line on the Messianic Psalms, those which are cited as referring to Jesus (www.bible-sermons.org).

The first quotation predicts the enemies of David will die because they persecuted the one whom God struck down (Psalm 69:25-28). Since David foreshadows Jesus, the apostles read this as Jesus being the One God struck down on the cross, which is in accord with Isaiah's prophecy, ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4 Then Peter quotes another psalm, 109:8b, 'Let another take his office.' But Peter is misquoting the Greek version of the Old Testament. Peter uses the imperative tense. In other words, another must take his office, implying they had to replace Judas. The

Commented [PW15]: Revelation 21:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Commented [PW16]: Luke 24:44 (ESV)

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Commented [PW17]: John 15:25 (ESV)

²⁵ But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'

Commented [PW18]: Matthew 27:34 (ESV)

³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.

Commented [PW19]: Psalm 69:25-28 (ESV)

²⁵ May their camp be a desolation; let no one dwell in their tents.

²⁶ For they persecute him whom you have struck down, and they recount the pain of those you have wounded.

²⁷ Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you.

²⁸ Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

actual tense (optive) from Psalm 109 is simply that another will receive his office. Another will take Judas' leadership role. If the Holy Spirit inspired it to be read in a different manner, I would not question what was done, but the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out. However, that does not preclude the possibility of God's inspiration.

²¹ So 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. Acts 1:21-22 Here is Peter's solution. Jesus told them to be witnesses to the world. Peter interpreted that to be a witness of Jesus' teachings, ministry, and the resurrection. This is his requirements to qualify as an apostle. The word "apostle" literally means a messenger, or one who is officially sent. There is a problem in the church today with so called apostles. Ephesians 4:11 tells of the different offices in the church and the first is apostles. The apostles conveyed the true teachings of Jesus. They could correct errors because they had heard from Jesus directly during the three years of His ministry. That is why they were first, and why they had authority to set the doctrine of the early church. Today, there are several denominations who claim to have apostles. They obviously don't hold to the definition in these verses. With that authority, they can powerfully influence churches, individuals, and override the local elders of a church. The Apostolic age ended when the last apostle, John the Beloved, died. Others were referred to as apostles, but not as being of the twelve.

Commented [PW20]: Ephesians 4:11 (ESV)

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. Acts 1:23 We know almost nothing about these two men. Barsabbas means Son of the Sabbath. It may have been his family name or he may have been zealous for the Sabbath. He had a Roman name as well, Justus. Matthias is mentioned by an early church father as having been one of the 70 that Jesus sent out, but we can't be certain of that (Luke 10:1). There is no other mention of his name in Scripture.

Commented [PW21]: Luke 10:1 (ESV)

¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

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. Acts 1:24-26 The thought was well intentioned. Jesus chose the Apostles. He should choose the replacement. They don't know the heart of these two men but God does. They found two men that fit the requirements and let God decide between their two choices by casting lots.

Casting lots was the Old Testament way of letting God decide. Proverbs 16:33 tells us ³³ *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.* It was the method by which the Promised Land was distributed to the tribes (Numbers 26:55) and also to determine which goat would be the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:8). It was never again used in the New Testament. Can we give God only two options? What if there was someone else, like the Apostle Paul? Was Paul inspired when he said he was an apostle? He did see the Lord alive after the resurrection, but he had to hear about the life of Christ from the original apostles. He said it was as if he was born at the wrong time (1 Corinthians 15:8). Paul declared himself to be among the

Commented [PW22]: Numbers 26:55 (ESV)

⁵⁵ But the land shall be divided by lot. According to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit.

Commented [PW23]: Leviticus 16:8 (ESV)

⁸ And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel.

Commented [PW24]: 1 Corinthians 15:8 (ESV)

⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

twelve when he said that he was the least among the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:9). He wasn't chosen with the twelve, but Jesus met him on the road to Damascus and appointed him to be a witness to kings and the nations (Acts 9:15). Considering the fact that Paul had a key role in spreading the witness of Jesus to the Gentile world and wrote most of the theology of the New Testament, whose name would you expect to find on the foundation of New Jerusalem? Who will sit on one of those twelve thrones. Matthias may have been an awesome witness. We just don't have any trustworthy record like we do with Paul. The last two thirds of this book is about Paul's ministry. Every letter from Paul begins with him declaring he is an apostle of Jesus Christ by God's choice (ex: Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:1, etc).

Which one do you think Luke would say was the one to take Judas' leadership role? Interestingly enough, Paul became a kind of treasurer for the early church, taking an offering from the churches of Asia Minor to the church in Jerusalem that was struggling under a famine (Acts 24:17). Paul had such an important role that he even corrected Peter (Galatians 2:11-14). As we will see in later chapters, Paul influenced the direction of the church by explaining to the leadership that he had been sent to the Gentiles who were receiving the Holy Spirit like they did on Pentecost (Acts 15:7-8).

How could Peter have guessed that God was going to fulfill His Word by picking a leading student of one of the chief rabbis, Gamaliel? How could he have foreseen a persecutor being transformed by an encounter with Jesus as Jesus had already ascended into heaven? Who would have guessed the church's worst enemy would be God's choice to take the Gospel to the Gentiles? God is always at work doing more than we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20)! Without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). Good intentions can't match the work of the Spirit. Obeying God is always the right thing to do. Waiting for His direction before you proceed is always the right thing to do (Psalm 27:14). **Being in one accord and devoting ourselves to prayer while waiting for God to direct is always the right way to go forward.**

I've asked you to be preparing your hearts for the Pentecost passage we are coming to next week, to be praying to be filled with the Spirit, to have willing hearts to do what the Spirit leads, to surrender every aspect of your lives to His will. Today we've seen prayer is an essential part of that preparation. Set aside time to pray, time to be still, time to listen. Wait for His direction. Life is filled with distractions. Take time to focus your life on what matters eternally (1 John 2:17).

Questions

- 1 Why is Jesus' family there?
- 2 How does the passage describe the 120?
- 3 When did the devotion to prayer end?
- 4 Why did they need twelve apostles?
- 5 How can the accounts of the death of Judas coincide?
- 6 Why does Peter think the psalm is about Jesus?
- 7 What did Peter change in the quotation?
- 8 What is Peter's requirement for an apostle?
- 9 What indicates the twelfth apostle was Paul?
- 10 How are we to prepare for days ahead?

Commented [PW25]: 1 Corinthians 15:9 (ESV)
⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Commented [PW26]: Galatians 1:1 (ESV)
¹ Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

Commented [PW27]: Ephesians 1:1 (ESV)
¹ Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and to the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

Commented [PW28]: 1 Corinthians 1:1 (ESV)
¹ Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

Commented [PW29]: Acts 24:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings.

Commented [PW30]: Galatians 2:11-14 (ESV)
¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.
¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.
¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.
¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Commented [PW31]: Acts 15:7-8 (ESV)
⁷ And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.
⁸ And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us,

Commented [PW32]: Ephesians 3:20 (NIV)
²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Commented [PW33]: John 15:5 (ESV)
⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Commented [PW34]: Psalm 27:14 (ESV)
¹⁴ Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Commented [PW35]: 1 John 2:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.