



Living Walking Serving

FAITH AND GRACE CHURCH

BIBLE STUDY NOTE ON

THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EARLY CHURCH (A BOOK STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES)

(Rom.15:4, Joel 2:28-32, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5)

STUDY 20-17: BEFORE THE PENTECOST

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Acts 1:12-26, John 7:5, Mark 3:21, 2Tim.3:16, 1Pet.1:11, 2Pet.1:20-21, Luke 6:12-13, Prov. 16:33, Lev. 16:8, Jos. 18:10; Neh. 10:34, 11:1; Prov. 18:18, Acts 8:29, 39; 11:12; 13:2; 15:28. 9:10-17, 11:27-30.

The followers of Jesus return to Jerusalem. (Act 1:12-14)

They returned to Jerusalem: This was notable **obedience**. Jesus told them to return to Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4), and that is exactly what they did. They didn't forget the sermon right after they heard it, they did what Jesus told them to do even though He was no longer physically present with them.

When they had entered, they went up into the upper room: Acts 1:15 tells us that there were about 120 present. This included the eleven disciples (the twelve minus Judas) are present; along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, the brothers of Jesus (such as James and Jude), the women who followed Jesus, and others.

The brothers of Jesus never seemed to be supportive of His ministry before His death and resurrection (John 7:5, Mark 3:21). After encountering the resurrected Jesus, they were changed into true followers of Jesus.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication: This was notable **unity**, and notable **prayer**. They all prayed, and they continued in prayer and **supplication**. The idea of supplication is a sense of desperation and earnestness in prayer.

We can see three important steps in making godly decisions: The disciples were in **obedience**, they were in **fellowship**, and they were in **prayer**.

Peter suggests selecting a replacement for Judas. 1:15-20

Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples: Here, Peter took a natural leadership role among the disciples.

Peter's words show wisdom we did not often see in him before. He began by noting that Judas didn't spoil God's plan, he fulfilled it (this Scripture had to be fulfilled). This is something that only wise and mature disciples can see in the aftermath of evil.

For it is written: Peter, quoting from two separate Psalms (Ps.69:25, 109:8), showed why God wanted them to choose another disciple to officially replace Judas.

This was notable **reliance** on God's Word.

The Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David: Peter equated the speech of David with the voice of the Holy Spirit. 2Tim.3:16, 1Pet.1:11, 2Pet.1:20-21

(Act 1:21-23) Qualifications are stated and two men are nominated.

One of these must become a witness with us: The disciples were bold enough to make a decision because they knew from God's Word that this is what He wanted. The apostles did not sense an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them; that was yet to come. But God did not leave

them without guidance. They knew what to do from the Word. Even when we don't sense a special guidance from the Holy Spirit, we have God's voice permanently established in His Word.

Any perceived guidance from the Holy Spirit will never disobey God's written word to us.

The disciples pray and cast lots to select a replacement for Judas. (Act 1:24-26)

And they prayed: They prayed first. This was a notable way of doing what Jesus would do. We remember that when Jesus chose His disciples, He prayed (Luke 6:12-13). The disciples, following Jesus, prayed for wisdom to know who the Lord would add to their number.

And they cast their lots: This was essentially rolling dice or drawing straws for the answer. Many people have questioned the method for choosing one of the two men;

Though they were not yet filled with the Holy Spirit as they soon would be, they still wanted to choose a method that would make them rely on God. Prov. 16:33: *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.*

Casting of lots was common in the Old Testament, understandably, since they did not have the Holy Spirit so generously available to all people. Hence lots and other 'like means' were frequently used - Leviticus 16:8, Joshua 18:10; Nehemiah 10:34, 11:1; Proverbs 18:18.

A search through the entire book of Acts will reveal that this was the only time such 'questionable means' were used to determine God's will.

After Acts 2, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, He (The Holy Spirit) was often credited with making of decisions - Acts 8:29, 39; Acts 11:12; Acts 13:2; Acts 15:28. God also used fellow Christians - Acts 9:10-17, Acts 11:27-30, to direct His people.

When making decisions today, we have four means at our disposal: The Word of God, the Holy Spirit, fellow Christians and sound guidance (which can come from other people trained in certain skills). By combining all of these means together we can safely reach godly decisions.

And he was numbered with the eleven apostles: No one can fault all the things they did before they cast lots. We must believe that all these things put them into the place where God would truly guide their decision.

i. We would not make many wrong decisions if we did all the things the disciples did before making big decisions.

- The disciples **obeyed**.
- The disciples were in **unity and fellowship**.
- The disciples were in **prayer**.
- The disciples were in the **Scriptures**.
- The disciples wanted to do **God's will**.
- The disciples used **sanctified common sense**.
- The disciples did what **Jesus** did.
- The disciples did what they could do to **rely** on God.

NEXT: THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EARLY CHURCH CONT'D (ACTS 2)