



Union Grove Bible Institute

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Acts 1:15–26

ACTS 1:15

¹⁵And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said

ACTS 1:15 Peter, leader of the apostolic band, **stood up among the** group of some **120** who were gathered together in Jerusalem. Obviously there were far more followers elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor. 15:6).

ACTS 1:16-17

¹⁶“Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus;

¹⁷for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.”

ACTS 1:16-17 Peter’s allusion to the Old Testament shows his high view of the Scriptures. The Psalms were inspired by **the Holy Spirit** speaking **through the mouth of David**. Peter’s assessment was that **the Scripture had to be fulfilled**. The verb “had to” is from *dei*, which is used of logical or divine necessity.

Peter said that David prophesied of **Judas**. But when did David discuss Judas Iscariot? Certainly he did not refer to him directly or name him. In the Psalms the Messiah is anticipated as the ideal King; therefore the royal psalms, which discuss the King of Israel, often anticipate Christ. Likewise the enemies of the royal psalmist became the enemies of the Messiah. Therefore Judas was predicted in Psalms 69:25 and 109:8 as Acts 1:20 states. Both of these psalms are royal imprecatory psalms (cf. Ps. 41:9).

ACTS 1:18-19

¹⁸(Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.

¹⁹And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

ACTS 1:18–19 Though **Judas** himself did not personally buy a **field**, he did so indirectly. The priests used the betrayal money Judas flung into the temple to make this purchase in Judas’ name (Matt. 27:3–10).

The account of Judas’ violent end in Acts 1:18 seems to contradict Matthew 27:5, which starkly says he “hanged himself.” One explanation is that Judas’ **intestines** quickly became swollen and distended after he hanged himself, so he **burst open**. Another explanation, more probable, is that Judas hanged himself over a cliff and the rope or branch of the tree he was using broke. When he fell to the rocks below, he “burst open.”

Akeldama is Aramaic for **Field of Blood**. The exact location of that field is unknown, but traditionally it is believed to be near the Greek Orthodox Church and Convent of Saint Oniprius, where the Valley of Hinnom joins the Kidron Valley, southeast of Jerusalem (see map).

ACTS 1:20

²⁰“For it is written in the Book of Psalms: ‘Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it’; and, ‘Let another take his office.’

ACTS 1:20 On Peter's quotation of Psalms 69:25 and 109:8 in reference to Judas, see comments on Acts 1:16–17.

ACTS 1:21

²¹“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

ACTS 1:21 Once again (cf. v. 16) Luke used the verb *dei*, translated **it is necessary**, to show logical or divine necessity. Interestingly the apostolate saw fit to replace the vacancy left by Judas, but later when the Apostle James died (12:2) no record was given of a successor being appointed. Evidently it was necessary to replace Judas' position because he had vacated his place of promise, referred to in Matthew 19:28. There **the Lord** promised the apostles they would sit on 12 thrones reigning over Christ's kingdom of Israel when He returns to reign on Planet Earth (cf. Rev. 21:14).

ACTS 1:22

²²beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

ACTS 1:22 The importance of the Resurrection is seen in the requirement that the replacement **must be a witness ... of His resurrection**. The resurrection of the Lord **Jesus** is a cornerstone of the Christian faith (cf. 1 Cor. 15).

ACTS 1:23–26

²³And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

²⁴And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen

²⁵to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.”

²⁶And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

ACTS 1:23–26 With **two men** to choose from, **Joseph** (alias **Barsabbas** and **Justus**) and **Matthias**, the apostles did two things: **they prayed** (acknowledging the Lord's omniscience; cf. Ps 139:1–6; John 2:25; 4:29) and **they drew lots**. Probably the two names were written on stones placed in a container. When the stones were shaken out of the container, the first stone to fall out was considered the Lord's choice.

This is the last time in the Bible lots were said to be used to determine God's will. A couple of observations are in order. First, no moral question was involved here. It was a matter of making a choice between two men who were apparently equally qualified. Second, this procedure may have come from Proverbs 16:33 which says the decision of lots is from the Lord.

Some feel the choice of Matthias was a wrong one. It is contended that this was a poor method of choosing and Paul should have filled the vacancy left by Judas' apostasy. However, those who believe Matthias was a proper selection argue that Matthew 19:28 is Jewish in its orientation and Paul was to minister to Gentiles (Gal. 2:9). Furthermore Luke, Paul's friend and companion, acknowledged the Twelve as an official group (Acts 2:14; 6:2). Finally, there is no sense or spirit of censure in the Acts account on the selection of Matthias.¹

¹ Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 356–357.