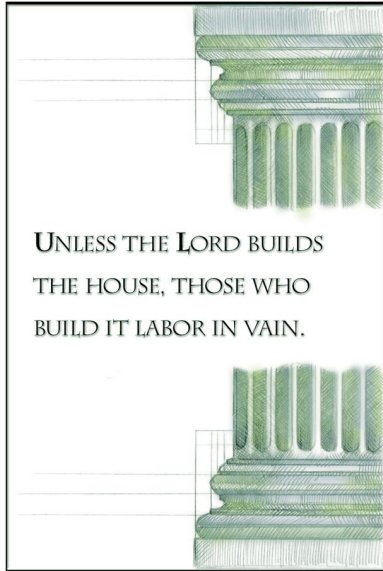


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 2



CHOOSING AN APOSTLE

Scripture Text: Acts 1:15-26

For several days after Jesus' Ascension, His Apostles and relatives and other disciples met daily in continuous prayer. They were waiting in Jerusalem as Jesus commanded for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Judas' sin lost to him his apostleship. Sin lost to him his salvation. This had been predicted many years before. The predictions of prophecy are always fulfilled. The remaining Apostles felt it was time for Judas to be replaced. Final choice of an apostle should have been left to God. The Apostles chose Matthias, whom we never hear of again. God later chose Paul, of whom we hear much. He wrote much of the New Testament. If we do not learn anything else from this lesson, we will learn the importance of dependence upon God to make decisions.

MEMORY VERSE: *Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*

—*Psalm 127:1*

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Matthew 27:1-10** Judas' sin leads to his death.
Tue.—**John 13:21-30** Jesus dismisses His betrayer.
Wed.—**Psalm 41:9-13; Zechariah 11:12-13** Prophecies.
Thu.—**Matthew 28:1-10** Message of Resurrection.
Fri.—**Acts 9:10-19** Final choice of an apostle left to God.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 5 We should let God lead us.

Judas' Act Foretold

Acts 1:15-17 There were about one hundred twenty of them. **Peter stood up.** He was a natural spokesman. In his three years and more with Jesus, he was always quick to speak. He brought up the subject of **Judas, which was a guide to them that took Jesus.** Judas' act was foretold **by the mouth of David** over one thousand years before and by Zechariah five hundred years before as we read in **Psalm 41:9** and **Zechariah 11:12-13.** Peter rightly names the Holy Spirit as the author of the prophecies (**2 Peter 1:21**). Being God's Word, it is true and could not fail of being fulfilled. **He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry**—was one of the twelve Apostles, chosen of Jesus. He was given high honor, most important work, and the great opportunity to know and experience the deep things of God. But he did not hold them in proper perspective. He certainly did sell out cheap.

Judas' Reward

Acts 1:18-20 After betraying Christ to His slayers, he **purchased a field**—or it was done by others—**with the reward of iniquity**—the thirty pieces of silver. Remorseful, he hung himself—no more opportunity to change his decision. All hope was gone. The field was used **to bury strangers in.** It was called **the field of blood** because "blood money" paid for it (Read **Matthew 27:3-10**). All Jerusalem knew of this. Bad news travels fast.

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It is written in . . . Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate . . . his bishopric let another take. His place as an apostle should be taken by another. Judas was a disciple, a believer, and follower of Jesus (**Luke 6:13**). Jesus made him an apostle, gave him power over disease and devils and sent him out to preach (**Mark 3:14-15**). This leaves no question that Judas was a saved man. **Verse 25** tells us he **by transgression**—by disobedience, which is sin—**fell**. From what did he fall? From grace. From his saved state. Jesus said he was lost (**John 17:12**). When he went **to his own place**, he went to the place he had chosen, to hell. This teaches all that a person once saved can be lost.

Seldom, if ever, does one fall suddenly from righteousness into sin. First, there is a listening to temptation, then considering of it, then yielding, a thought, a word, an act, and then much bolder acts. God is long-suffering and of tender mercy. It is possible that Judas had many a look and Word from Jesus designed to lead him from his downward path. Covetousness, envy, and resentment grew until he was a thief and finally, the betrayer of Jesus. Beware of the first wrong thought. Judas fell gradually. He was not forced to sin. The foretelling of his sin a thousand years before did not mean he could not avoid it. It only meant God knew he **WOULD** sin. He was free to choose, and the result of his choice was his tragic end.

Matthias Not God's Choice

Acts 1:21-22 Then Peter proposed selection of one to fill Judas' place. He felt that the Scriptures made it their obligation— **must one be ordained**. Here we find five examples to make us more effective servants of our Lord. (1) **Companied with Jesus**. One must have a personal relationship with Jesus. One should know firsthand the doings and teachings of Jesus. This makes more effective our (2) witness **of his resurrection**. (3) They were in **one accord** of spirit. (4) They continued **in prayer** (**verse 14**). (5) Dependence upon God to make decisions.

Acts 1:23-26 How was the apostle chosen? **They appointed two**, and then **they prayed**. They were to pray and wait, not appoint and pray. They asked God to **shew whether of these two thou hast chosen**. They received no answer because their prayer was not according to God's will. Only God ordains for His work. Man only recognizes and accepts those God has ordained. Peter and the others did only what man can do without leading from God, they chose two. This is confusion. God never confuses. He never appoints two persons for the same place. God had not chosen either of the two men to fill Judas' place.

The lot fell upon Matthias. In modern expression, they flipped a coin. All accepted Matthias as God's choice **and he was numbered with the eleven apostles**. There is no further mention of Matthias. We do not read of the church using the method of casting lots after the Holy Spirit came. When God was ready to fill the vacancy left by Judas' sin, He called the Apostle Paul in a very definite manner that all could recognize. We have read much about Paul all through the New Testament.

The leading purpose of an apostle's life is to witness of Christ's Resurrection. Peter spoke of this witness. As we study Acts, notice the prominence given to the teaching of Christ's Resurrection. It is the crowning point of His life on earth. It is the focal point of our hopes, for as He arose, we shall rise to enter unending life. That is, we will if here we are made alive in Him.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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