

Replacing Judas

Acts 1:12-26

44-5

Let's open the Word of God now to the book of Acts, and we're going to look at the section from verse 12 all the way down to the end of the chapter, with small hope that we would ever be able to cover all of it. And that's perfectly all right; we'll go as far as we need to go.

Acts chapter 1, beginning at verse 12. And since I'm not sure how far we're going to go, we'll wait to read it as we go through it. The glorious goal of God and the history of redemption is right on schedule. It always is on schedule, always has been on schedule. And as we are flowing through the book of Acts we have established the fact that redemption has so far had three great elements. First of all, the Old Testament, full of promises which are all yes and amen in Jesus, meaning He is the one who fulfills them all, the whole of the Old Testament moves in the direction of the arrival of Christ. And then the next great movement in redemptive history is the gospels, the four gospels which tell of His arrival and His accomplishment and His departure, which is the fulfillment of the Old Testament and describes the work that He began. Then we come to the book of Acts and this is the next great, sweeping volume in the history of redemption, God's continuing work as the apostles preach the gospel and established churches to gather the believers and equip them to continue to fulfill the Great Commission. And this section goes on being written through all of human history until the return of Christ.

So in the section before us in the book of Acts, Luke is letting us know that God's plan continues, promised in the Old Testament. The Old Testament fulfilled in Christ, Christ then promises the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes in the book of Acts, enabling the apostles and those subsequent to the apostles to fulfill the Great Commission to preach the gospel, gather the redeemed into churches and continue the work.

When we come to verses 12 to 26 we come to the situation regarding Judas. And I think it is recorded here so we get some closure on the life of Judas, but also to show us that not even the most horrendous, unthinkable apostasy by one of the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ can in any sense delay or thwart the continuing progress of God's plan, even betrayal at the most intimate level is no surprise to God. It was anticipated in the Old Testament. It was anticipated by the Lord Jesus Christ, predicted in the Old Testament, predicted by Jesus, it came to pass. And it does not, in any sense, do damage to God's purpose. God's purpose unfolds exactly as God designed it.

Chapter 2, verse 23 says, "This man" - meaning Christ - "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God." It was Judas originally who delivered Christ into the hands of his Jewish enemies. But he was delivered over even by Judas and then subsequently by the Jews to the Romans and to death as a part of God's plan.

In chapter 4, verse 27, "For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant

Jesus whom you anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles, and the peoples of Israel to do whatever your hand and your purpose predestined to occur.” Everybody who had a role in arresting Jesus, trying Jesus, and executing Jesus was fulfilling God’s predetermined plan.

In chapter 13 of the book of Acts, we read, “For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath fulfilled these by condemning Him.” The people who condemned Jesus were fulfilling prophecy.

So back to chapter 1. God’s redemption is on schedule. And the very action of Judas to betray Him, to deliver Him over, to play a role in the horrible treatment of Christ was all predicted, all prophesied, all included in the plan. That in no way lessens the guilt of Judas any more than it lessens the guilt of the Jews, than it lessens the guilt of the Gentiles who were all complicit in His death. God’s redemption is on schedule, unfolding as sovereignly determined.

Now we also noted that in preparing the apostles for their role in redemptive history; a critical role, Ephesians 2:20, the apostles and prophets are the foundation of the church. They are the foundation of the church. So in preparing the apostles for that, you remember Jesus spent time during the 40 days between His resurrection and His ascension in verses 9 through 11 teaching them, preparing them.

And you will remember they needed to have the right message. So He taught them everything they needed to know about the gospel, about the kingdom. They needed the right manifestation. He showed Himself alive to them by many incontrovertible proofs so that they would know the plan was continuing. He promised them the right might or the right power that the Holy Spirit would come upon them, as verse 8 says, “And they would be witnesses.” He also left them with the right mystery. They wouldn’t know when He would return to establish His kingdom. And that would mean that in every age, in every time, people would carry on the work, not knowing when Christ would come, and they would be faithful until that mystery was resolved in His return. And He defined the mission and what is the mission, to be witnesses. And that’s kind of where we ended last time, that their task was to be witnesses and they were to be motivated by the fact that He would come back in the same manner as they’d seen Him go, verses 9 to 11; they just didn’t know when.

And I ended our message last time by saying to you, “We face a new day for witnessing in the world.” We’re living in a time in our country that is more like the experience of the early church than ever in the history of America. In thinking about that this week, I put together a letter that I’m going to send out to the mailing list of Grace to You that kind of articulates that. And I don’t think I’ve ever done this, but let me read you this because it helps for us to grasp the world in which we currently live and the urgency with which we must take up the task of being witnesses to Christ.

“The world in which the first Christian lived was brutal, totally pagan and openly anti-Christian. There was no affirmation of morality or any sort of cultural Christianity. Early believers were aliens to everything in the culture. What’s more, Christians had no governmental advocacy or special protections. And so unrestrained persecution was happening to them everywhere. Proclaimers of the gospel essentially became martyrs, hence the word *marturos* becomes the word for witness. To embrace Christ often meant signing one’s own death warrant.

What was the church doing that caused such resentment, hostile treatment and persecution?

Christians preached the words of Jesus about God becoming incarnate, about the bread of heaven coming down. The message was simple and clear: if you don't repent and believe in Him you're going to hell forever. They were confronting sin and calling people to deny themselves and become lifelong slaves to a crucified Jew, and it was a hard sell. They were preaching a gospel that was deeply offensive both to Jews and Gentiles.

I can't help but think of how much our own culture has changed in recent decades and how rapidly it is becoming Acts chapter 1 and for that matter, Romans chapter 1. Perhaps like me, you grew up in America when there was widespread cultural Christianity, a kind of Christian consensus. To some degree, people understood the church, the Bible and the gospel. They accepted the Judeo-Christian ethic. While most people weren't genuine Christians there was still superficial acceptance of or at least tolerance of a cultural Christianity in politics, business, education and public life.

Where are we today? Where's the general acceptance of the tenets of the Bible and Christian values? Where is the influence of the religious right or the Moral Majority? Gone. No more. There is no more cultural Christianity. There is no collective Christian consensus wielding any significant power in this country. In fact, the more biblically true Christians are and the more they speak and live, the more they are going to be labeled as extremists, homophobic, intolerant and guilty of hate crimes. We're now aliens.

And I think we can all foresee a day when being a faithful Christian could cost our lives. I think we are closer than ever to living in the conditions like the people did in the book of Acts. So is there any good news? Actually, I believe the current situation is good news. For years I've been concerned by the church's pursuit of cultural change through political and social activities, large swaths of Christians who've placed enormous time, energy, money and hope in the wrong places. Hand in glove with that, superficial cultural Christianity has blurred the clear lines between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this world and softened the hard demands of the gospel, making professing Christ easy and without cost.

As a result, churches have been filled with highly religious, superficially moral, self-righteous people who don't understand the gospel and are self-deceived about their true spiritual state. But now with the façade of cultural Christianity crumbling, true Christianity is starting to stand out in a way it hasn't in our lifetime. Scripture teaches and church history confirms that the body of Christ is most potent and most effective when it simply speaks and lives the gospel without equivocation or apology. With the mask of a superficial Christianity gone, I believe the best days for the spread of the true gospel may be ahead of us because the gospel advances by personal witness to Christ one soul at a time."

That's how we ended last time so that's how we begin this time with that recognition that we are witnesses in the world and maybe with a fresh understanding of what that means. Now there's one other component that has to be filled in before this all begins in the book of Acts, the right message, the right manifestation, the right might, the right mystery, the right mission, all laid out. One other, and that is the right men. The right men. Or in this case, the right man to fill up Judas' place. And that's what takes us into the section beginning in verse 12.

This is where we see the Lord add the final man to fill up the 12 apostles who will be the foundation of the church. Let's begin reading in verse 12. "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying, that is 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. These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer along with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.”

Now let's just take that chunk as we begin to take a look at this section. The Lord has chosen 12. One has defected. They are select men. In John 15:16 Jesus said to them, “You have not chosen me, but I've chosen you and ordained you that you go forth and bear fruit.” They are the 12 chosen out of all others. Again, they had to be eyewitnesses to Christ, they had to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection, and they had to be personally chosen by the Lord.

In fact, if you look at chapter 10 you hear Peter say this, Acts 10:39, “We are witnesses of all the things He did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is to us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead and He ordered us to preach to the people and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. And of Him all the prophets bear witness.” So the apostles and the prophets are the first generation of preachers. The apostles themselves are eyewitnesses of His life and death and resurrection, ordained to be the first preachers. Our Lord Jesus had appointed them originally and they are then given this task. They are the foundation of the church. “He gave to the church” – Ephesians 4:11 – “apostles and then prophets.” Subsequently, evangelists and teaching pastors took their place.

This is a calling from God. This is a unique calling from God. Apostles, only 12, with the addition of the apostle Paul. You say, “Well, wait a minute, was Paul an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ?” Yes, he was. He saw him on the Damascus Road. In chapter 22 of the book of Acts, Paul gives a testimony there. He says a man came to him named Ananias, in verse 13 of 22. Standing near, he said, “Brother Saul, receive your sight.” You remember, he was blinded. “And at that very time I looked up at him and he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One that is Christ and to hear an utterance from His mouth for you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized. Wash away your sins, calling on His name.’” Get at it. So Paul is added to the 12 as an additional apostle at a later time.

God then determines that the beginning of this first generation of preachers will be these chosen eyewitnesses. He gifts them with miraculous gifts, signs, wonders and gifts of an apostle. Second Corinthians 12:12 says, “Why do they have the ability to do signs and wonders?” So that they can validate that they are the true representatives of God by the signs that they do. One of them is a traitor. One of them is a traitor. Judas, you noticed, was not listed there in the names that are given in verse 13. He's already unmasked. He's already out of the picture. But God had designed 12, and the ranks need to be filled in.

This then is the final work of preparation before the Holy Spirit comes and the whole enterprise is launched. Get the right men. That becomes kind of the dominating theme in this passage. But we'll see how far we get. I want to break this section from verse 12 to 26 into three parts. Number one, the submission of the disciples. Number two, the suicide of a disciple. And number three, the selection of a disciple. Submission of the disciples, suicide of a disciple, and selection of a disciple. But let's begin where Luke begins, with the submission of the disciples in the passage that I read you.

Jesus had told them not to begin their mission yet. Verse 4, gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem. They were told they were gonna be witnesses - Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the end of the earth, down in verse 8 - but not yet. Wait for what the Father had promised, which He said you heard of from Me. And what did the Father promise? The Father had promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, verse 5. John baptized with water. "You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now and then," verse 8, "you will receive power from the Holy Spirit when He comes upon you and be witnesses."

In fact, in Luke 24, as Luke ends his gospel - volume 1 - verse 49, Jesus says to them, "Wait in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." So they're in the waiting place right now. They have to wait. They have to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit to empower them to do this task. John 16:7 in the upper room, even before His death He said, "I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away. If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes He will, through your preaching, convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. He will lead you into all truth, bring all things to your remembrance. He will empower you to be a witness." So don't go anywhere yet. Wait for the Holy Spirit. He must leave so that the Holy Spirit can come. Don't leave Jerusalem.

Book of Luke ends this way, "After worshiping Him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising God." So they're waiting in Jerusalem. Verse 12 picks the story up right there. "They returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet" – where Jesus had ascended into heaven. That's how Luke ends. That's how Acts begins – "which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey."

I think it's interesting that all of that is there. If this is written to Jews who lived in the land of Israel, they wouldn't need all this information. "They returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away." Everybody who lived in Israel knew exactly where it was. Didn't need all of the geographic explanation, which indicates to us that whoever was receiving this letter needed that information because he wasn't familiar with it.

And we know who that was, that was Theophilus, Theophilus, some Gentile man of noble responsibility and highbrow location in the social structure. Unfamiliar with the area, so he's given some geographical identification. This is the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem separated from the eastern side of Jerusalem, the eastern wall, the eastern part of the temple by the brook Kidron. From the temple at the eastern side of Jerusalem you go down the Kidron Valley, the brook Kidron, then back up to the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives rises about 400 feet above the bed of the Kidron creek and towers about 200 feet above the city of Jerusalem.

So when you get to the top of the Mount of Olives you can see across the top of the wall toward Jerusalem. If you were to stand on the Mount of Olives at dawn, you would see the sun rising from the valley below to the east. The light would come over the top and shine first on the eastern wall of the temple and then it would spread to blanket the city. It's a beautiful vantage point. I've been there a few times.

It was from that location that Jesus ascended. Then from there they went back into Jerusalem. Back into Jerusalem is a Sabbath day's journey away. What is a Sabbath day's journey? It's actually a measurement. It became a measurement. Like a half a mile or a cubit or any other measurement. It started out as the distance a Jew was permitted to travel on the Sabbath. And remember, they were

very fastidious about taking care of the Sabbath. You weren't supposed to do anything, anything that was like work. So they put restrictions how far you could walk. How did they come up with those restrictions? Well, they came up with about - I think it's 2,000 cubits, which would be 3,000 feet, which is something over half a mile. That's as far as you could walk.

This is not in the Mosaic Law, by the way. But the rabbis concocted this. And here's how they did it. It was determined traditionally that in the camp of the Israelites when the tabernacle was placed in the camp and the tribes were all placed around the tabernacle or actually on each of the four sides of the tabernacle. They were no further out than 200 cubits or 300 feet. And of course on the Sabbath they had to walk to worship. So that became sort of the boundary. Since they would have to travel that far, the furthest of them around the tabernacle to get to the tabernacle on the Sabbath it became acceptable to walk about a half a mile. So what you're learning here is that the Mount of Olives is about a half of mile from getting inside the city gate of Jerusalem.

And so they left and they walked that half a mile. And when they entered the city – verse 13 – they went up to the upper room where they were staying. There was a rental room there. And maybe the same one where they had the Passover. Perhaps. There's some who believe that. The same upper chamber where they met for the Passover.

And if so, the same chamber where on resurrection day they were all gathered in fear, and Jesus showed up. And maybe the same place where eight days later He showed up again. Some pretty exciting things happened in that room, that upper room. So they went back to the upper room. There were only 11 of them, as I said. Verse 13 doesn't mention Judas. He's absent. And we're gonna find out what happened to him later. But first, we need to know who's there. Judas, by the way mentioned, the son of James, is a different Judas. What were they doing there? Well, they were waiting 'cause they were told to wait. So "they were with one mind continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."

The women were there. Who were the women? They don't even identify them. The women. You could use an upper case *w* there because they're well-known to us: Mary Magdalene; Mary, the wife of Clopas; Mary and Martha; Salome; all the women that were around at the time of Jesus' death, all of the women who believed in Him, who followed Him. And then not only were those women there, but with His brothers.

And what do we know about His brothers? Back in chapter 7 of John, verse 5, they didn't believe, right? They didn't believe in Him. His brothers are James, Joses or Joseph, Simon or Simeon and Jude. James was there. And by the way, James had a personal appearance of Jesus. He's not an apostle; he's the brother of our Lord. He's not the James who's one of the intimate apostles, Peter, James and John. This is James, the brother of our Lord, but he had a personal appearance of Jesus after the resurrection, which was very rare. He did appear to the apostles, and He did that repeatedly. And He appeared to the 500 in Galilee. But James had a personal appearance, 1 Corinthians 15:7, it says, "He appeared to more than 500 brethren at the one time, and He appeared to James, then to all the apostles."

Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to James no doubt was what brought James to faith in his half-brother. And the conversion of James probably led to the conversion of the rest of the brothers. James then becomes the head of the Jerusalem church, and James writes a wonderful epistle. And another of His half-brothers, Jude, writes the epistle of Jude. So they go from being unbelievers to a

post-resurrection appearance to James, which then is the initial beginning of the salvation of his brothers. And they end up very, very predominant places in the church and James is martyred for his faith. It's an incredible transformation. Really amazing, wonderful transformation. Must have been wonderful conversation, the apostles and now Jesus' brothers who previously didn't believe and all the women waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. They've all seen the risen Christ. And oh, by the way, also, Mary, the mother of Jesus is there.

Do I need to say nobody was worshiping her, just as a footnote? Nobody was venerating her. She's not identified as having a place of superiority. Nobody had lit candles for her. No. They are continually devoting themselves to prayer, so they're likely kneeling, which is also indicated because in verse 15 it says that this time Peter stood up. She was kneeling like all the rest, expressing as great a need as theirs. Back in her Magnificat in Luke chapter 1, verse 46, she praised God, my Savior. She is not a savior. She is not co-redemptrix. She needs a savior. By the way, this is the last mention of Mary in the scripture. This is it. When the Holy Spirit was poured out, chapter 2, she too was placed into the body of Christ as a redeemed Christian, like any other believer. She was a sinner like any other sinner. She had no part in redemption. She needed to be redeemed. You cannot find any veneration or worship of Mary, any kind of Mariolatry in the early church. That bizarre, strange doctrine dates back to paganism infiltrating Christianity.

Mother and child cults that go all the way back to Nimrod, the apostate of the patriarchal age, who persuaded his followers to build a tower to heaven and launched idolatry. Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, had an infamous wife named Semiramis, the first high priestess of idolatry. Babel became the fountainhead of all idols. Semiramis became kind of the mother of every pagan system in the world, and when God scattered them at the Tower of Babel, idolatry was scattered.

And like Nimrod and his high priestess wife, there were male and female deities. And there were hatched all kinds of children. In Assyria, in Nineveh, she was called Ishtar. In Phoenicia she's called Ashtoreth. In Egypt she became Isis. In Greece she was Aphrodite. In Rome she was Venus. And the story is always the same. Semiramis gave birth to a son. It is said in paganism that the son was miraculously conceived by a sunbeam to fabricate a kind of virgin birth. She offers her son as the promised deliverer of the earth; his name is Tammuz. When he grows up, a wild boar, according to the legend, slays him and after 40 days of his mother's weeping, mourning and self-denial, for forty days, he rises from the dead. So she has a son born or conceived by a sunbeam who rises from the dead after 40 days, and that's where Lent comes from and has nothing to do with Christianity.

The false story begins in evil Babel. The son's name is Tammuz. In Egypt his name is Osiris. In Greece his name is Eros. In Rome his name is Cupid. And in Phoenicia his name is Baal. This is Satan's counterfeit mother-child cult that finds its way into Christianity. Forty days of Lent, what is that? That was 40 days of weeping over Tammuz before the feast in celebration of his supposed resurrection. By the way, these cults had priests, sacramental rites, dedication of virgins to the gods, purgatorial fires, and on and on it goes. And you can read about this in Jeremiah 44 and in Ezekiel 8.

Modern Roman Catholicism is not Christian. It is an abdominal mixture of pagan Babel and Christianity. So what were they doing there? Well, verse 14, "with one mind they were continually devoting themselves to prayer." That's what they were doing. "Continually," strong expression. Persistently praying. That's how they'd been taught to pray, with importunity, with persistence, with single heart and single mind. They spent the time praying. What do you think they were praying for? Of course they were praying for what was to come, for the great responsibility they had, for the future

that was unknown to them. They're together in persistent, single-hearted prayer.

I want to say something at this point because it's important. Don't misunderstand. The coming of the Holy Spirit didn't depend on that prayer. Jesus didn't say, "Go, and if you pray hard enough I'll send the Holy Spirit." He said, "Wait until I send the Holy Spirit." That was a fact. That was a fact. There's an entire movement of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement that is based on the notion that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given to believers who ask for it. Not so. The coming of the Holy Spirit on these believers and on any believer is based on God's sovereign will. Nothing is said about them seeking it. Nothing is said about them praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit. They aren't told to pray. They're told to wait. And in God's time, at His moment, the Spirit will come. And while they're waiting, they choose to commune with God.

Well, Jesus had told them, John 14:13 and 14, "Whatever you ask in My name I'll do it." They must have had a lot on their minds. Of course they prayed. And they had fellowship. And they talked. And they were in the temple daily rejoicing during those days. There was joy. They were praising God. They were moving around the city of Jerusalem. Prayer was a vital part of their lives. And they were all waiting for the divine timetable that will unfold. Which it did, chapter 2 verse 1, "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place." That was God's designated moment. They didn't pray to receive the Holy Spirit. They didn't pray in order to have some kind of experience. They just waited. And in waiting they did what believers do. They fellowshiped. They worshiped. They praised and they prayed.

It was in that setting, verse 15, that Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, a gathering now of about 120 persons was there together. Somewhere during these days between the ascension and Pentecost, just a matter of a few days, they had come together and stayed together and maybe in different places. But they're all gathered in one place, chapter 2 verse 1 says; here we learned there are 120 of them. Small start, right? Very small start. Somebody calculated that's 1 out of every 30,000 Jews in Israel. But they were ready and they were about to be empowered and qualified. That's a small start to reach the world, isn't it? Small start.

I suppose most pastors would think that 120 people wouldn't get much done. Not in this case. So the little group submitted to the Lord, the submission of the disciples. They did exactly what He told them to do. Exactly what He told them to do. Wait, wait. They hadn't always done that. He told them to go to Galilee before His ascension, do you remember, and wait. And they didn't wait. They went back to fishing, to their career. But this time they submit.

The second thing we see here is the suicide of a disciple, a suicide of a disciple. Peter says, "Brethren," verse 16, "the Scripture had to be fulfilled." Now let me stop right there. This is new vernacular for Peter. He's never talked like this before. I told you some weeks ago when we began to look at kind of an overview of the book of Acts that what strikes you, as you open the book of Acts, is for the first time the disciples are seeing everything from an Old Testament perspective. What made the difference? Well, what turned them from being cowards to being powerful preachers? Yes, the coming of the Holy Spirit, certainly, but even before the Holy Spirit comes, in chapter 2 verse 1, they are now aware that everything they have lived through is Scripture being fulfilled.

Peter stands up, takes charge and says Scripture had to be fulfilled. I love that coming from him. Now that's the same Peter who said, "No, no, no, Lord, you're not going to die, you're not going to die, you're not going to die. We're not going to let that happen." And Jesus says, "Get behind me,

Satan.” Once you know the Scripture, the Messiah must suffer and die. Don’t you know, Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Zechariah 12? Their ignorance through the whole life and ministry of Jesus came from their inability to connect everything that was going on with the Old Testament.

But once they got through those 40 days of instruction that really began the day He rose and went on Emmaus road and opened the Old Testament, the Moses, and the Law and the prophets and the holy writings and explained all the things concerning Himself to those on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24. Then, later that same night, went to the upper room and did it all over again for all of them, explained the Old Testament, connected all the dots between the Old Testament prophecies and the New Testament fulfillment that He accomplished. They, for the first time, get it.

And so here is Peter showing us that they now are making all the connections. “Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas.” Wow, they not only know now that the Old Testament prophesied Messiah, Messiah’s death, Messiah’s resurrection, but there are even prophecies by David, the psalmist, about Judas.

That’s just amazing. They knew the Psalms. Psalms like this one: Psalm 41 and verse 9. “Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” They knew Psalm 55, “for it is not an enemy who approaches me, then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me. Then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion, and my familiar friend, we who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng.”

David speaking about the betrayal. Jesus knew Judas was that familiar friend. God didn’t make Judas what he was. Judas made Judas what he was. But God planned Judas into the redemptive scheme. He was chosen by God, not apart from his own will; he wasn’t made to betray Christ. But he was allowed to be an apostle to play a role. That role was crucial to what God was accomplishing through Christ. Everybody in that situation was a God-ordained player, whether it was Annas or Caiaphas or Pilate or Herod, they all had a part. They all fit in in some way.

In the 17th chapter of John, you remember this, verse 12, “While I was with them,” Jesus says to the Father, “I was keeping them in your name, which you have given me and I guarded them. And not one of them perished” – Listen – “but the son of perdition so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.” “The Scripture would be fulfilled.” Even Judas’ betrayal predicted in the Old Testament. So again, I’m telling you this is a huge reality to these men to now be able connect everything, the Old Testament to Christ and all the details of Christ’s life, death and resurrection.

By the way, “the Scripture had to be fulfilled,” - Listen – “which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David.” Can I tell you that is how you explain inspiration? What is the Scripture? It is the word from the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David. Divine inspiration is the Holy Spirit speaking through the mouth of David. Very often in the Old Testament you read things like, “The word of the Lord came to so and so.” “The word of the Lord came to so and so.” And God always communicates verbally in words of divine inspiration. And the Holy Spirit in the Scripture foretold in the Psalms, through the mouth of David, which was written down, the truth concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

Judas did exactly what the Old Testament said he would do. Ah, it’s an amazing thing, amazing.

Guilty himself, making his own choices, operating in his own fallen realm of freedom, he did exactly what his evil heart wanted to do. And yet he did it in precise fulfillment of the purpose of God. It's amazing how sinners think that by not coming to God they somehow operate in freedom. They don't. No one does. Everybody's freedoms are within the sovereign power, purpose and providence of God. So when Judas did what he did, the Old Testament was vindicated. The Old Testament was validated. The Holy Spirit being its author.

Verse 17, "For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry." He received a share in the ministry for a divine purpose, and that divine purpose was to be the betrayer of Jesus Christ. By divine appointment. He was given an important office, the office of an apostle. But he was never saved. And this again takes us back to John 6, the end of the chapter, "Did I not Myself choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" Now He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him." That was all prophesied. Jesus knew it. He knew he was the devil. He knew he was the betrayer. He fellowshiped with Jesus for three years. He would have been one of those in Matthew who said, "Lord, Lord, we did this in Your name and did that in Your name." He would have actually done it, cast out demons in Your name, did many wonderful works in Your name. That's a Judas verse. He called You Lord, preached in Your name. But his heart was cold. It was full of greed. He was a classic arch-apostate.

What happened to Judas after his betrayal? Verse 18, "(Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)" What did Judas do? He got his 30 pieces of silver, Matthew 27 says, he went right back to the leaders of Israel and what did he do? Threw it on the ground. Blood money. His guilt was overwhelming. Tried to return it. It burned in his hands like hot coals. They took the money. They took the money, the leaders, and acquired a field with the price of his wickedness.

It says, "Now this man acquired a field." Of course he did it through them. A field that would be used to bury strangers, bought with blood money. And apparently he went to that place, tried to hang himself. The knot wouldn't hold or the rope broke or the branch broke, and he fell and burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. This is the purchase of the field, Hakeldama, across the Hinnom Valley, west and above the spot where the Kidron Valley and Hinnom meet. There Judas went to die.

He is such a despised character that his death is often made even worse, if that's possible. There are some early writers who said that he received a disease, and he became so swollen that a wagon could pass through space that he couldn't because he was swollen with corruption, some kind of disease. And it finally became so severe that his body exploded. That's fabrication but expresses the terrible disgust that people had with this man. There's no need to add an unnecessary mythology to it.

But please notice this tragic end, verse 20, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, "let his homestead be made desolate and let no one dwell in it and let another man take his office." Wow. Two prophecies. First one, Psalm 69:25, predicting that Judas' place would be vacated; "let his homestead" - his place - "be made desolate." And then his second prophecy, Psalm 109:8, "someone else will take his place." Someone else will take his bishopric, literally. His *episkopos* in Greek.

Here now again, Peter sees the detailed fulfillment of the Old Testament. We also get a good insight into how well they knew their Old Testament to find those things. Perhaps Jesus had helped them a little. That gets us to the final point, and I think we might just take it as it comes. The selection of a disciple. The submission of the disciples. The suicide of a disciple. The selection of a disciple. "Therefore," says Peter - having dispensed with the terrible final end of Judas who went to his own place - Jesus said - "It is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time, that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us - beginning with the baptism of John 'til the day that He was taken up from us - one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." Well, now we've got to fill in the place. There has to be an eyewitness, has to be somebody who accompanied us all the time, that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. Which tells us that Jesus traveled not only with the 12 but with others who believed in Him. I mean there are 120 here. Somebody who was there at the beginning with the baptism of John, when John the Baptist baptized Jesus down at the Jordan until the day of His ascension, one who was a witness of all of it including His resurrection. He had to be an eyewitness of the life and ministry of Jesus. He had to be an eyewitness of the resurrection. But he also had to be chosen by God.

So they put forth two men about which this was true, "Joseph, called Barsabbas" - not to be confused with Barabbas - "also called Justus, and a man named Matthias or Mattathias." These two men had been there since the baptism of Jesus at the Jordan River all the way 'til His ascension; we don't ever see them on the pages of the gospels. "So they prayed." "So they prayed and said" - Here's the third element: eyewitnesses in life and ministry of Jesus, eyewitness of the risen Christ chosen by God - "so they prayed and said, 'You Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.'" You've got to show us.

How's He gonna do that? Well, they use a familiar Jewish Old Testament pattern: they drew lots. They asked the Lord, providentially, to control the length of the stick, if that was what it was. "And they drew out, and the lot fell to Matthias." By the way, the other guy didn't demand a redraw. He didn't leave the group to join somebody else's group. Accepted the divine choice. He accepted the divine choice. This is such an interesting thing. If you go into the Old Testament you have occasions where God demonstrates His will and choice in such a fashion. You have this statement in Proverbs 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap" - that seems a random thing - "but it's every decision is from the Lord." This is one of the ways in the past that God revealed His will. The last of sort of the Old Testament economy because there are no more lots past the day of Pentecost in the Bible. Matthias, don't know much about him. Means "gift of the Lord." Now the apostolate is complete. It's complete.

What about Matthias? Well, there's some historical record about him, that he preached in Judea. He was, by the way, as an apostle a preacher, a gospel preacher. And he preached in Colchis [???], this goes back to the Fathers, Colchis, which would be the modern Republic of Georgia on the Black Sea, that was once a part of the Soviet Union. And as the story goes, he preached in Colchis near the Black Sea so powerfully and so effectively that he was stoned to death. So his ending was like almost all the other apostles. By the way, if you go to that area of the world today, you will find a marker near the ruins of a Roman fortress with his name engraved. That is believed to be his grave site.

So now we have everything we need for the Holy Spirit to come. Can't help but say at the end two men, Judas and Matthias, what a difference, huh? Matthias martyred for the preaching of the gospel;

Judas, a clumsy suicide. Judas in hell, his own place; Matthias in heaven. And the ranks are filled. And now we're ready for the big event. Now I'm going to be gone next Sunday, so you're going to have to wait for the big event at Pentecost. But we're going to have a great time when we get there.

Lord, thank You for our time tonight, in Your Word - been so refreshing, so encouraging as always. Thank You for the love You have shared and brought in our hearts, which love extends back to You through Your word. We don't know anything about You except what Your word says, and we love You, in loving Your Word. And loving Your Word, we love You. Because it's the only You we know. We thank You that You've given us so much to love, so much to admire as well as so much to obey, so much to proclaim. Thank You for a wonderful day together. In Christ's name, amen.

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