

Waiting for the Holy Spirit - part 2

1. Review
2. Waiting for the Holy Spirit ... and praying
3. Waiting for the Holy Spirit ... and replacing Judas
4. The take-away for us

Review

1. Why study the book of Acts?
 - a. Luke 1:3-4 "...so that [we] may have certainty concerning the things [we] have been taught." [SLIDE]
2. Four things needed to happen while they were waiting for the Holy Spirit [SLIDE]
 - a. Receive their commission from Jesus (6-8)
 - b. See (witness) Jesus' ascension into heaven (9-11)
 - c. Persevering in prayer (12-14)
 - d. Replace Judas with Matthias (15-26)
3. How was Jesus involved in these four events?

Waiting for the Holy Spirit ... and praying

1. Acts 1:12-14 [SLIDE]
2. "Then they returned to Jerusalem..." (12)
 - a. Who returned?
 - i. The eleven apostles
 - ii. Anyone else? See 1:21-22 for the possibility that there were others. [SLIDE]
 - b. From where? [SLIDE]
 - i. "...from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away." [SLIDES]
 - ii. What is a Sabbath day's journey?
 1. 2,000 cubits, or three-quarters of a mile
 2. History of "Sabbath day's journey?"
 - a. Not a biblical command, but a work-around that the powers-that-be in OT Judaism came up with to limit people's activities on the Sabbath day.
 - iii. Why does Luke get so specific about the location?
 1. "so that we may have certainty"!!
 - c. Once in Jerusalem, they went to ... "the upper room, where they were staying..." (13) [SLIDE]
 - i. Luke lists the eleven remaining apostles

1. Similar to Luke's earlier list in **Luke 6:13-16**, except that he arranged them differently. Is this significant? John Stott thinks it might be significant. [SLIDE]
 - a. Luke is a careful person - why change the order of their names arbitrarily?
 - b. "Peter and John and James and Andrew"
 - i. Starts with the leading apostles
 - ii. The brothers Peter and Andrew are separated, perhaps to signify a new brotherhood?
 1. See **1:16**
 - c. "Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew"
 - i. Rearranged much like the first four
 - ii. Who is Bartholomew? Is he Nathaniel mentioned in John 1:45ff?
 1. Maybe. Bartholomew is a patronymic, based on the name of one's father, so in this case, son of Tholomew. Likely it is not his given name.
 2. See **1:23** for another example
 - d. The remaining apostles are arranged the same as in **Luke 6**, though Judas Iscariot is missing now.
- d. "...devoting themselves to prayer..." (14) [SLIDE]
 - i. What were they doing?
 1. Praying
 - ii. How?
 1. "with one accord"
 - a. Unity
 2. "devoting themselves"
 - a. They were persevering in prayer
 - iii. With whom?
 1. "the women"
 - a. See **Luke 8:1-3** [SLIDE]
 - i. Mary Magdalene
 - ii. Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager
 - iii. Susanna
 - iv. and many others
 - b. See also **Luke 23:55-24:1, 10** [SLIDE]
 - i. Mary the mother of James
 2. "and Mary the mother of Jesus"
 3. "and his brothers (and sisters)"
 - a. Roman Catholic Church traditionally says Jesus didn't have brothers or sisters, since Mary remained a perpetual

1. **Acts 1:15-26** [SLIDES]
2. “In those days...” (15) [SLIDE]
 - a. Which days?
 - b. Between the ascension and Pentecost; about ten days.
3. Peter takes the lead and addresses the brothers, or company of persons
 - a. “the company of persons was in all about 120”
 - i. How does this reconcile with **1 Corinthians 15:6**? [SLIDE]
 - ii. Some think that those “more than five hundred” were in the region of Galilee, and this one hundred twenty is obviously in Jerusalem
4. “...the Scripture had to be fulfilled... (16) [SLIDE]
 - a. Which Scripture?
 - i. **Psalms 69:25 and 109:8**, which he quotes in verse 20 [SLIDE]
 - ii. See also **John 17:12**, which is probably referring to **Psalms 41:9** [SLIDE]
 - b. What does Peter say about Scripture in general?
 - i. “...the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand...”
 1. Inspired by the Holy Spirit
 - ii. “...by the mouth of David...”
 1. The human element, or author
 - c. Why do these quotes in **1:20** seem different than what we see in the Old Testament, especially the **Psalms 69** quote? [SLIDE]

- i. For one thing, Luke was using the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament Scriptures, while our English Bibles typically use the Hebrew version(s).
- ii. Peter has individualized these two Psalms to apply to Judas.
- iii. Is this a “liberty” that we can take with Scripture?
 - 1. No, or not likely.
 - a. Peter was an apostle.
 - b. Jesus had “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” in **Luke 24:45**.

5. “...concerning Judas...” [SLIDE]

- a. He “became a guide to those who arrested Jesus”
 - i. He was a traitor, a betrayer
- b. He “was numbered among us and allotted his share in this ministry.” (17)
 - i. Restating that Judas was one of the original apostles
 - ii. There was now a void in their number that needed to be filled
- c. In **1:18-19** Luke inserts a parenthetical statement to tell us more about Judas. [SLIDE]
 - i. These verses wouldn’t make sense if they were part of Peter’s speech.
 - 1. Peter would not have used the phrase “in their own language” if he was talking about the Jews, of whom he is one
 - ii. Judas bought a field.
 - iii. He fell headlong, or swelled up, and burst open in the middle, and his bowels gushed out.
 - iv. This incident became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
 - v. The field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.
 - vi. Compare this to **Matthew 27:3-10**, where we learn that: [SLIDES]
 - 1. Judas tried to give the money back to the chief priests.
 - 2. They wouldn’t accept it because it was “blood money.”
 - 3. They used it to buy “the potter’s field” to use as a burial place for strangers.
 - 4. This fulfilled a prophecy by Jeremiah.
 - 5. The field became known as The Field of Blood.
 - vii. So the chief priests bought the field, but they did it with Judas’s money, so it works for Luke to say in **Acts 1:18** that Judas bought the field, by representation. [SLIDE]
 - viii. Luke emphasizes that what Judas did was “wickedness,” even though it had been prophesied that he would do this.
 - 1. God is sovereign, and yet humans are responsible for their choices and actions.

- d. In **1:21-22** Peter says this is the time to fulfill these two **Psalms**, or at least **109:8**.

[SLIDE]

- i. First, why replace Judas?
 1. They are basing their decision on the guidance from these two Psalms.
 2. Jesus had chosen twelve apostles as the foundation of the church, and the missing apostle needed to be replaced...before the founding of the church.
 3. Why only replace Judas, and not, for example, James the brother of John when he is martyred a few years later?
 - a. James died an honorable death and did not defect.
 - b. By that time the church had been founded and was growing.
- ii. Criteria for Judas's replacement
 1. Must have "accompanied" the apostles with Jesus
 - a. beginning with Jesus' baptism
 - b. continued with them until his ascension
 2. Why? To become a "witness to his resurrection."
 - a. Compare with **4:33** [SLIDE]
 3. Some commentators think this was all a mistake, and that Paul was meant to be Judas's replacement. [SLIDE]
 - a. I used to hold this position, until recently.
 - b. Paul did not meet the criteria for this particular office of apostle (one of the original twelve).
 - c. Luke in **no way** indicates that they were mistaken in what they did.
- iii. From a human perspective, who chooses Judas's replacement? **(23)**
[SLIDE]
 1. "And they put forward two..."
 2. Who is "they?"
 - a. The apostles?
 - b. More likely, the company of persons.
 - i. See **6:1-4**
- e. Two choices are presented, both good men **(23)**
 - i. Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus
 - ii. Matthias
- f. Then, they prayed **(24)**
 - i. What do we learn about the Lord here?
 1. He knows the hearts of all = God is omniscient
 - a. Does this mean that the one not chosen was evil? No.
Arguably he wouldn't have made it this far in the process if he was.

2. “show which one of these two you have chosen” = God is omnipotent, even over the casting of lots
 - a. More about this in a moment...
- g. “And they cast lots...” (26)
 - i. Why didn’t God just tell them whom he had chosen to replace Judas? If it is or was normal for God to speak audibly to his people, surely this would have been a time to do it.
 1. Thoughts?
 - ii. We know from their prayer that they trusted that the Lord would make his decision through their method. What might they have been basing this on?
 1. **Leviticus 16:8** [SLIDE]
 2. **Proverbs 16:33** [SLIDE]
 - iii. Casting lots was sanctioned in the Old Testament, but after this event it is no longer referenced in the New Testament. What changed?
 1. The coming of the Holy Spirit in **Acts 2**.
 - iv. Is casting lots normative? Should we follow this example?
 1. You could, but you probably shouldn’t. What’s a better option?
 - a. Asking God for wisdom, something that he has sanctioned in **James 1:5** [SLIDE]

The take-away for us

1. Why did Luke write Luke-Acts? So that we could have certainty about what we believe as Christians. Acts is the history of Christianity in its earliest days. Being a Christian who doesn’t know the book of Acts is like being an American who doesn’t know the history of America.
2. Prayer is important, and if the apostles are a worthy example, it should be done together in unity and with perseverance.
3. In making important decisions, pray and ask God for wisdom, use our common sense, and trust God for the outcome.

Resources

1. *The Message of Acts*, John Stott
2. <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Sabbath-Days-Journey>
3. <http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201312/did-jesus-have-brothers-and-sisters-28224>