

Paul: the Twelfth Apostle



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“And they put forward two, **Joseph called Barsabbas, who was called Justus, and Matthias.** And having prayed, they said, “You Lord, knower of the hearts of all, show which one of these two **You have chosen to take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas turned aside to go to the own place.**” And they gave **LOTS** for them, and **the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.**” Acts 1:23-26.

Now, reading this we may be confused to think, is it right for New Testament believers to cast lots to determine the will of God? When considering this question there are legitimate points we need to take into consideration, the first and most important of all is that, the Apostles did not take this step just for the sake of it, but they did it according to the truth of the word of God as prophesied by David in Psalms in regards to the fall of Judas as, “**Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, has lifted up his heel against me.**” Psalms 41:9. And in regards to his ministry as, “**Let his days be few, and let another take his office.**” Psalms 109:8. So we can see they drew their own **SOUND** conclusion from the Scriptures, yet it was **APART** from the leading of the Holy Spirit. And the fact they cast lots to determine who should take up this office was also according to the Covenant of the Old Testament, that it was the practice of the priests of the Law to cast lots to determine the will of God for which purpose they carried the Urim and Thummim. And Proverb says, “**The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.**” Proverbs 16:33. So on the surface level the steps they have taken were sound and was according to all that they knew and have practiced in the past. At this point it is **VERY** important to bear in mind they did **ALL** this before the day of Pentecost, so the Holy Spirit neither affirmed nor hindered them from taking these steps. So they themselves selected the two out of the 120 according to a sound criteria they determined and cast lots to appoint one to the office of apostleship of Judas.

The main point here is that the New Testament was not going to be business as usual. The priesthood of the Law was determined according to the criteria of fleshly descendant, for which the casting of lots was an expression. [Hebrews 7:14-16.] Now, if they had stopped to consider their own ministry which the Lord had appointed them which was contrary to the Law, maybe they would not have rushed into this error. That is the Lord having spent the whole night in prayer before God, then selected the twelve apostles from among the many that followed Him. [Luke 6:12-16.] The point being Lord Himself is the one who appoints those who are going to serve Him, and Paul makes this very clear saying, “And **He gave some indeed to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers**, toward the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-12. This call to the service of God is not determined according to the dictates of men, yet this is the only place we can say of the Apostles that what they did they did in ignorance, because they did not have the Holy Spirit when they took these steps.

Now, a few chapters later we have the conversion of Paul and it is recorded in Acts as, the Lord speaking to a man of God called Ananias whose name in Hebrew means “the Grace of God,” saying, “Having risen up, go into the street called Straight, and **seek in the house of Judas the one of Tarsus named Saul**, for behold, he is praying, and **he saw in a vision a man named Ananias**, having come and having put the hands on him, so that he might see again.” And when Ananias protested against Saul on how much harm he has done to the church, the Lord affirmed saying, “**Go, for this man is My vessel of choice to carry My name before the Gentiles, and also kings, and the sons of Israel.**” Acts 15:11-12,15. Now, it was NOT a coincidence that Saul of Tarsus was found in a house belonging to a man called Judas, this is to signify to us that Paul is the chosen vessel of God to take up the ministry of Judas from which he turned away. That is, Paul was meant to be the 12th Apostle to be numbered among the eleven not Matthias. And the fact that Ananias protested in this matter is also significant because it shows that it is not us who determines whom the Lord chooses to serve Him, but by the merit of Grace, God has selected Saul to serve Him.

If any lesson is to be learned from this is that, we do NOT determine who gets to serve God or not, as Paul says, “**Who are you, judging another’s servant? To the own master he stands or falls.**” Romans 14:4.
