

## Acts Part 2 – Judas and Selection of new disciple

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney – Wednesday, September 2, 2015

† In our last study we gave an introduction to the Book of Acts and covered the first 14 verses which dealt with an account of Jesus meeting with the disciples and then ascending into Heaven. Tonight with the Lord's help I would like to look at the verses 15-26 which covers the death of Judas and the selection of a new disciple.

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

When we left off last week we saw that the disciples along with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren, were in an upper room continuing in prayer. We find here that there are a lot more people at this point. The Bible says about an hundred and twenty.

Notice that the Apostle Peter is clearly the leader of the disciples. We know that he was one of the inner circle and most trusted of all Jesus' disciples. He is still fulfilling the leadership role despite the fact that he had denied Jesus three times before his crucifixion. We know that Peter sought forgiveness of his sins and was forgiven by Christ.

Though Peter plays a very prominent role in the Church and in the Kingdom of God, he is not to be worshiped or seen as a Saint to be prayed to or considered the "First Pope" like the Roman Catholics do. The reason for this confusion is the Catholic's misinterpretation of:

Matthew 16:13-19

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, *Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, *But whom say ye that I am?*

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

19 *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

The Roman Catholics take this to mean that Jesus is building the Church upon Peter, but that is not what this is meaning. He blesses Peter for understanding that He is the Messiah and then he states, "upon this rock I will build my church." Jesus wasn't implying that Peter was the rock that the Church was being built upon, but rather that Jesus himself is the rock. All throughout the Scriptures you will find that the Lord is referred to as the rock and foundation of the Church:

**Deuteronomy 32:4:** He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

**2 Samuel 22:2-3** And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; 3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

**Psalms 18:31** For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God?

**Romans 9:33** As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

**1 Corinthians 3:11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now, that part where Jesus says "and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," Jesus is referring to the fact that Peter would be the one to usher in the New Testament Church age which we will be reading about next Wednesday starting in verse 2 where Peter preaches on the Day of Pentecost and 3,000 souls were saved. This was the beginning of the New Testament Church. The kingdom of Heaven is everything that encompasses God and the Lord Jesus Christ and is referring to those that are saved and living in His kingdom, which is the kingdom of Heaven. It does not mean Peter is holding a set of keys and unlocking heaven's gates letting people in and out. The city of Heaven and the kingdom of Heaven are not the same thing.

Okay, I spent more time on that than I intended, so let's get back to our main text in verse: **16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.**

So Peter is addressing the missing disciple, Judas Iscariot. He says that "this scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas." That Scripture that Peter is referring to is the prophecy given by King David in **Psalms 41:9:** Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

Peter said that this Judas that was prophesied about was one of us, he was part of our ministry.

**18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.**

Here Peter tells about the death of Judas. He says that Judas purchased a field with the reward of iniquity. Do not let that confuse you. Let's look at how that field was bought over in the Gospel of **Matthew 27:3-10:** 3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. 6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the

thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; 10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

So Judas threw the money down in the Temple and left but the chief priests took it and bought a potter's field to be used for burying people. But, what Peter was implying as that this field was the results of Judas' iniquity. In essence he did buy it even though he didn't make the purchase or sign the papers, it was his blood money that paid for it.

Then Peter gives us some more details about Judas' demise. We know that Judas hung himself but Peter includes the fact that afterwards he fell headfirst and burst open and his bowels gushed out. It is believed that Judas hung there long enough for his body to swell up bloated and eventually the rope he used broke and he fell to the ground and burst open. That is a pretty disgusting thing to think about but an ending suitable for a traitor of Jesus Christ.

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

Just as we read in the Gospels, the name of the field that was bought with the 30-pieces of silver was called "the field of blood." That word "Aceldama" is actually a Chaldean word which literally means "field of blood." Then Peter refers to two different passages of Scripture from the Psalms: **Psalm 69:25** Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

And in application to his statement: *and his bishoprick let another take.* That word "bishoprick" means "the office of a bishop." Here he is referencing **Psalm 109:8** Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

And so Peter gives the purpose for his meeting. It is to appoint another disciple to replace Judas with so they can maintain the unity of the 12 disciples. I mentioned in our last study of the importance of there being 12 disciples. This is something that you don't hear much about and I dare say I've not heard any preachers preach about it. But there is a significant importance about there being 12. The number 12 is a very important number in Bible numerology and in our everyday life. The number 12 represents completeness.

1. The number 12 is mentioned 189 times in our King James Bible.
2. Jacob had 12 sons which represents the 12 Tribes of Israel. (**Genesis 49:28**)
3. Ishmael, the son born to Sarah's handmaiden because of disobedience when Abraham had relations with her, also had 12 sons, which became princes and have an important role in the Muslim religion. This is where Islam came from. (**Genesis 25:16**)
4. Elijah built an altar with 12 stones to lay the sacrifice on and called down fire from Heaven. (**1 Kings 18:31**)

5. The Bible mentions that Jesus was 12 years old when Mary and Joseph found him in the Temple talking with the teachers. (**Luke 2:42**)
6. Jesus chose 12 disciples. (**Luke 6:13**)
7. The woman that Jesus healed that had the issue of blood, had been afflicted for 12 years. (**Luke 8:43**)
8. In the feeding of the multitudes with the five loaves and two fishes, they collected 12 baskets of leftovers. (**Mark 6:43**)
9. Jesus said from the cross that he could pray and the Father would send 12 legions of angels to come and rescue him. (**Matthew 26:53**)
10. In the Book of Revelation the woman from Heaven, who represents the Nation of Israel, will have 12 stars in her crown. (**Revelation 12:1**)
11. The Bible says there are 12 gates to the City of Heaven, with 12 angels, and the names of the 12 Tribes inscribed and there are 12 pearls, one on each gate. (**Revelation 21:12 & 21**)
12. The Tree of Life will grow 12 different types of fruits. (**Revelation 22:2**)

Those are just a few of the instances of the number 12 being important in Scripture. There are also things like; there are 12 months in a year, the days are divided into two twelves, etc... I know I spent a lot of time on that but I think it is important to know why the disciples chose a replacement for Judas. It meant that they were complete.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus. The name Barsabas means son of Sabas. They said his surname was Justus. That was a name bestowed upon him most likely due to his character of being "just." Some people believe that this man was the same man we know as Barnabas, one of Paul's partners in the ministry but we cannot verify that.

Matthais – we really don't know anything else about these two men as they are not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. However, these two men are apparently men that have proven themselves worthy to be considered for such an office. Most likely they were both qualified the same so they needed a way to choose between the two. Notice that first they prayed and asked the Lord to show them which of the men he wanted to be chosen.

Some say that this casting of lots was not authorized by God and that is why Matthais is not mentioned again and that Paul was really the chosen disciple of God. But that is not true. Most of the other disciples are not mentioned again after this either and Paul was an Apostle to the Gentiles, not the Jews.

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† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible