

**Brookland Baptist Church**  
**Bible Study**  
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Lecture IV

February 23, 2022

**The Book of Acts**  
**Acts 1:21-26 – Acts 2:1-3**

**Acts 1:21–22** - *“Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”*

The main reason for this process was to make sure that there were twelve apostolic witnesses. They also believed that a twelfth disciple would be necessary to fulfill such promises as **Matthew 19:28** and **Luke 22:28–30** (the twelve disciples sitting on twelve thrones in the kingdom government). The church was regarded as a fulfillment of the Old Testament righteous remnant, those faithful to God, and so must assure its rightful place. The Twelve were needed to lead. Because Judas betrayed Christ, he had to be replaced because twelve faithful leaders were needed. James was not replaced after his death because he had not defected from the faith. Even after James’s death, he still was regarded as one of the Twelve.

Peter pointed out the qualifications of the one who was to be chosen. Notice that it had to be someone who had been with Jesus and the other disciples *the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up*. Such eyewitness involvement was absolutely necessary for the credibility of the person bearing witness to the words and the works of Christ. This one would join the other apostles in being *a witness ... of his resurrection*. What this witness said would be a testimony to the credibility of the life of Christ and the words of Christ. It is clear that, in addition to the twelve disciples, many others had consistently followed Jesus throughout his ministry on earth. The Twelve were his inner circle, but many others shared deep love for and commitment to Jesus. It was now simply a matter of finding the one who would be elevated to the title of apostle.

## **Wise Decisions:**

In choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot, the apostles outlined specific criteria for making the choice. When the “**finalists**” had been chosen, the apostles prayed, asking God to guide the selection process. Their deliberate actions serve as a good example of how to proceed when making important decisions. We should set up criteria consistent with the Bible, examine the alternatives, and pray for wisdom and guidance to reach a wise decision.

*Acts 1:23 – “So, they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.”*

In answer to Peter's request, the eleven apostles proposed two men who met the qualifications of Acts 1:21-22. "Barsabbas" means "son of the Sabbath." "Matthias" means "gift of God." Very little is known of these men.

*Acts 1:24-25 – “Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”*

Leaders must be appointed through prayer. God must be sought for two very clear, but often neglected reasons.

God alone knows the human heart. A person's heart cannot be truly known by others. Only God can see within. Men can be fooled; and the fact was perfectly clear, for Judas had deceived the early believers, drastically so. It was perfectly clear they could choose a counterfeit, a carnal believer. They had to seek God, for He alone knew what was in the heart of man. (*John 2:24-25*)

God alone had the right to choose. The church, the office, the mission was His. God alone knew whom He wanted to fill the office. They had to ask in order to find out God's will.

*Acts 1:26 – “Then they cast lots. Matthias was chosen. So, he was added to the 11 apostles.”*

The final phase of this choosing process was that they cast lots. This casting of the lots was not done casually or flippantly, for the apostles had carefully chosen two candidates according to certain qualifications and then had spent time in prayer. The final process of casting the lots was

likely done by writing the two names on two stones and then placing them into a container. The first stone to fall out when the container was tipped would be considered God's choice.

## **Acts Chapter 2**

### **The Birth and Growth of The Church**

#### **Introduction:**

The Day of Pentecost was one of the most phenomenal and important events in all of history. There are several reasons why the event was so important.

- It was “the coming of the Holy Spirit.”
- It was the birth of the church.
- It was the corporate filling of the Holy Spirit, of the body of believers with the promised presence of Christ (*John 14:16-18*).
- It was the personal filling of the individual believer by the Holy Spirit.
- It was the Presence and Power of God coming upon believers, gifting and equipping them to proclaim the glorious message of salvation to men.

In Old Testament times, the Spirit of God came upon isolated individuals or smaller groups only on special occasions and only in a temporary way to help them accomplish God's purposes. As the apostles were gathered together in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, the time had come for the fulfillment of Christ's promise to send his Spirit completely and permanently upon all believers. This marvelous outpouring of God provided the supernatural power for believers to take the life-changing message of the gospel to the ends of the earth. This is the day Christ made good on his promise to send the Helper, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit who would take up permanent residence in those who put their faith in Christ.

**Let's take a historical look at Pentecost.**

**Feast of Pentecost – Providence of God:** There was God’s providence. The Feast of Pentecost needs to be understood in order to see God's providence at work. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the Passover.

It was also known as:

- the “**Day of the First Fruits**” (*Numbers 28:26*),
- or the “**Feast of Weeks**” (*Exodus 34:22*),
- or the “**Feast of Harvest.**” (*Exodus 23:16*)

**Acts 2:1** – “*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.*”  
(NRSV)

The *Day of Pentecost* was an annual feast celebrated on “*the day after the seventh Sabbath*” after Passover (*Leviticus 23:15-16*). Since the date was determined by the passing of a “*week*” of weeks (*seven weeks*), it was often called the Feast of Weeks. The word “*Pentecost*” means “*fifty*,” so named because this Feast was celebrated *fifty days* after Passover. It was originally the Feast of the First fruits of the grain harvest. By this time Jews had associated Pentecost with the giving of the Law (Torah) at Mount Sinai. Pentecost was one of three major annual feasts celebrated by the Jews (along with Passover, fifty days earlier, and the *Feast of Tabernacles* about four months later).

Jesus was crucified at *Passover* time, and he ascended *forty days* after his resurrection. The Holy Spirit came *fifty days* after the Resurrection.

There are two themes that comes to mind: the first is Unity: there was the Spirit of being in one accord. The same mind or Spirit; oneness of mind and heart. It means to be one in Spirit and purpose. *Homos* means *same* and *thumos* means *Spirit or mind*. The believers, all 120 of them in the upper room, were of the same Spirit, of the same mind. The idea is they were after the same thing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were focusing and concentrating their thoughts and energies upon seeking God for the promise of His Spirit. The second theme that comes to mind is obedience. Jesus had instructed the disciples to “*tarry*” in Jerusalem until they were endued with power (*Luke 24:49*). The believers were in “*one place*,” in the city of Jerusalem precisely where Christ told them to go and wait upon the coming of the Holy Spirit. They were obedient—obedient despite the great danger the Jerusalem authorities posed to them. One thing is absolutely essential if a believer wants to receive the fullness of God's Spirit: *obedience*.

**Acts 2:2** – “*suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.*”

**Suddenly**. The Holy Spirit came suddenly, abruptly, unexpectedly, the kind of abrupt happening that jolts and startles a person. God was dramatizing the supernatural and precious significance of the event. There was a mighty sound that filled the room.

**The sound was from heaven, that is, from God.** It came from God's activity, not from the activity of natural causes upon earth. It was supernatural. God created sound for this very special occasion. It was so phenomenal that the best way that Luke could explain the experience was to say that the sound was like the rushing of a *mighty* wind. It was not wind, but a sound like the deafening roar or blast of a strong wind the sound filled *all the house*, that is, it was localized upon the house where they were *sitting*.

**Acts 2:3** – *“Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.”*

There was the appearance of *cloven tongues (diamerizomenai)*. The Greek means *a tongue that was cloven*, that is, *parting asunder or divided*. The idea is that a single tongue appeared and then began to split and divide itself, resting upon each of the disciples. The tongues were not fire, but like fire; that is, they only looked like fire. They were a brilliant, luminous, fire-like substance created by God to dramatize the moment of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples.

The tongue of fire that first appeared symbolized the presence of the Holy Spirit which was to dwell in the midst of God's people as a whole.

At Pentecost God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit's ministry by sending fire. And while at Mount Sinai fire had come down on one place, at Pentecost fire came down on many believers, symbolizing that God's presence is available to all who believe in him.