

## Introduction

How many of you have ever struggled with making a decision? You think about it. You weigh the pros and cons. You pray about it. You may even get some counsel. But, you have a hard time making the final decision. That is what we find in our passage today. The apostles needed to make a decision about who would take Judas Iscariot's place. But, before we get to our text today, I want to take some time to talk about apostles. We are just starting our study of the Acts of the Apostles. It would be helpful to understand more about apostles for the study of this book, and even more so for our text today.

It is a privilege and a pleasure to be able to teach the passage of Scripture that we have before us this morning. The church today is largely ignorant about apostles. Many do not understand the office of apostle. They do not understand the work of the apostles. Many teach that the purpose for the apostles was to write the New Testament. Therefore, they believe that the gift of apostle went away once the Scriptures were canonized. I could spend the next couple of months teaching on apostles, but I am not going to do that. Instead, I will give a brief overview of apostles before we get into our text for today so that we can gain a better understanding of the passage.

### A. Definition of Apostle

First, let's look at the definition of apostle. The Greek word for apostle is *apostello*. Our English word is what we call a transliteration. The word *apostello* comes from *apo*, which means away and *stello* which means to set apart. The combination means one who is sent out or set apart. **An apostle is a "sent one."** In Acts 13, the leaders at Antioch and the Holy Spirit *sent out* Barnabas and Paul. From that point on, they were referred to as apostles, or "sent ones."

(Acts 13:3) "Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 14:14) "But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out"

G652. *apostolos*, ap-os'-tol-os; from G649; a delegate; spec. an ambassador of the Gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ ["apostle"] (with miraculous powers):--apostle, messenger, he that is sent.

G649. *apostello*, ap-os-tel'-lo; from G575 and G4724; set apart, i.e. (by impl.) to send out (prop. on a mission) lit. or fig.:--put in, send (away, forth, out), set [at liberty].

### B. The Place of Apostles

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul says that he does not want the church to be ignorant or unaware about spiritual gifts. In that chapter he tells us that all of us are Christ's body, and individual members of it. And **God has appointed in the church first apostles**. As we look at the work of an apostle, we will see why the Lord has appointed apostles first in the church.

(1 Cor 12:27-28) "Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. {28} And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

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When the Lord appointed the first leaders, He called them apostles. These apostles were from His disciples that had been following Him. Jesus had many disciples that were following Him, but these twelve disciples were called and appointed to be apostles. In Matthew 10, Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Matthew gives the names of the twelve apostles (apostolos) that Jesus sent out (apostello). The word sent out is apostello. apostles are... Jesus chose the apostles first.

(Matt 10:1-5) “Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. {2} Now the names of the twelve apostles (apostolos) are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; {3} Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; {4} Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. {5} These twelve Jesus sent out (apostello) after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans;

Apostles were not just people who were sent out; they are sent out with authority to perform certain things. In this passage we see some of the authority that Jesus gave His apostles for healing and deliverance. There are some commentaries that say that the apostles are missionaries. Others call them messengers. There are many missionaries that are not apostles. Probably most of them today are not apostles. Most messengers are not apostles. **Apostles are people who have been called, gifted, anointed, given authority, and sent out to do a special work.** Let’s take a look at what apostles are sent out to do, the work of an apostle.

### C. Work of Apostle

#### 1. Apostles plant and establish churches

There are many reasons for God appointing apostles first in the church. One of those reasons is to plant and establish churches. Not everyone that plants a church is an apostle, but it is one of the things that apostles do. **Part of planting a successful church is laying the foundation.** Apostles and prophets lay foundations in churches. Ephesians 2:20 says, “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.

(Eph 2:20) “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,”

What is the foundation of the church? Notice in this verse in Ephesians that Christ Jesus is the cornerstone. Jesus is the foundation. When I planted the East Mountain Vineyard Church, one of the first series that we did was on 1 Corinthians 3. We were careful to lay the foundation of Christ. Recently, in our message on Essential Doctrines, we looked at 1 Corinthians 3 again. Paul refers to himself as a wise master builder who laid a foundation according to the grace of God that was given to him. That grace was to be an apostle, and to lay foundations in churches. At Corinth, he laid the foundation of Jesus Christ. He goes on to say that people need to be careful how they build on that foundation. He concludes by saying there is no other foundation besides Jesus Christ.

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(1 Cor 3:10-11) “According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. {11} For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

The apostle Paul said in Colossians 1:28-29 that “we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with wisdom that we may present every man complete in Christ.” It begins with preaching the gospel. Apostles would go into a town and preach the gospel. They did not look for disgruntled Christians who had just left their church. They preached Jesus. They preached Jesus to the Jews first, and then to the Greeks. Then, they would plant and establish a church with those new believers.

(Col 1:28) “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.”

Another aspect of planting churches is to raise up leaders. An example of this can be found in Acts 14:23. Barnabas and Paul went to various cities, preaching the gospel and planting churches. Then, they would return at a later time and appoint elders in every church. They would pray and fast about those decisions, following Jesus’ example. Then, Barnabas and Paul would commend the elders to the Lord. **Apostles** do not try to do all the ministry; they **raise up and release people into ministry**.

(Acts 14:23) “When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

**Apostles mentor leaders.** In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians he tells them that if they had countless tutors in Christ, they would not have many fathers. He became their father through the gospel. Obviously, he was not their physical father; he became their spiritual father through the gospel. As a spiritual father, he mentored people, particularly the future leaders of the churches. He took Timothy under his wings and mentored him. He referred to Timothy as his beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He did not just do this to Timothy. This was what he did in all the churches. Paul was a spiritual father. The church today needs spiritual fathers, especially at a time where the family is so dysfunctional. Apostles are spiritual fathers.

(1 Cor 4:14-17) “I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. {15} For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. {16} Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me. {17} For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.”

**Apostles strengthen churches.** One verse earlier in Acts 14:22, Luke writes that Paul and Barnabas were traveling to the various churches and were “strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith. In Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas went separate ways. Paul chose Silas and after being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord, they traveled through Syria and Cilicia. What did they do? They strengthened the churches. That is what apostles do; they strengthen churches.

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(Acts 14:22) “strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

(Acts 15:40-41) “But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. {41} And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”

### 2. **Apostles set things in order.**

Part of setting things in order is raising up leaders. In Titus 1:5. Paul left Titus on the island of Crete and told him to ordain elders in every church. He had given Titus some specific instructions on how to identify or qualify those who could serve as elders. There were five cities on the island of Crete, and he ordained elders in the churches in each of these cities.

(Titus 1:5-6) “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, {6} namely, if any man is above reproach...”

But, setting things in order goes beyond setting in church leaders. Sometimes problems develop in a church, and they need apostolic help to set them in order. **Apostles solve problems.** We see in Paul’s letter to Titus that things were not in order. They go into difficult situations and straighten out messes. What was the reason that Paul left Titus in Crete and told him to set things in order? They needed proper government, and they needed to silence certain men who were upsetting the faith of many in the church. They were leading rebellious lives. They were deceiving people. They were teaching things for the sake of sordid gain. They had wrong motives. The churches on the island of Crete were out of order, and Paul left Titus there to put things in order. That is what apostles do.

(Titus 1:10-11) “For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, {11} who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.

There are other types of order. Donald gave an excellent message on order. He talked about the order of marriage, family, and church. In addition to that kind of order, which I call governmental order, there is procedural order. I addressed that in the message on communication. The people were not to talk at the same time. They were to talk one by one. Why? Because God is a God of order and when everyone talks at the same time, there is chaos. There must be procedural order.

There is also functional order. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that the church will begin to grow when every joint supplies. The church will grow when all the members begin to function in the gifting and calling that is on their lives. The church needs to be able to identify their gifts, and then start operating or functioning in that gift. That is functional order. There is also administrative order. In any organization, all the bases need to be covered. Everyone cannot play shortstop. We need someone on third base. We need someone on second base. We need someone on first base. We need a left fielder. We need a center fielder. We need all the bases covered. When a ball is hit to the second baseman, the shortstop covers second base. When the ball is hit to the shortstop, the second baseman covers second base. All the players have to know who is doing what. Administrative order is very necessary for the church or any organization to function properly. Apostles are given the grace to put things in order. They have a divine sense of order and organization. That is part of the grace and anointing that God gives them.

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Part of setting things in order involves giving correction when necessary. Paul told Titus to set in order the churches, and part of that was correcting the false teaching. In Paul's letter to Timothy, he tells him to correct the false teaching that was taking place in Ephesus. In Peter's letters, he talks about false teachers and false prophets. **Apostles bring correction when necessary.** In Acts 15, the churches were being upset by Judaizers, who said that you had to be circumcised to be saved. Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and met with the apostles, and they looked into the matter. Once a decision was reached, they went to all the churches and communicated that decision. They ensured that the correct doctrine was being taught in all the churches.

Sometimes correction is given for false doctrine, but many times it is for sin. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and confronted them about division and immorality. He said, "what do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness." In his second letter, he wrote so that he would not have to use severity with them when he came. He said that he had been given authority to bring correction.

(1 Cor 4:21) "What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?"

(2 Cor 13:10) "For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down."

### 3. **Apostles impart spiritual gifts**

In Romans 1:11, Paul wrote that he longed to see the saints in Rome so that he could impart some spiritual gift to them so that they could be established. We do not know what the spiritual gift was, but only that it would help establish them.

(Rom 1:11) "For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;"

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he reminds Timothy to kindle afresh the gift of God which was in him through the laying on of Paul's hands. Paul, as an apostle, laid hands on Timothy and imparted a spiritual gift to him. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he exhorts him not to neglect the spiritual gift of God which was bestowed on him through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Paul, and the other elders, prophesied over Timothy and imparted a gift.

(2 Tim 1:5-6) "For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. {6} For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

(1 Tim 4:14) "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery."

These are just some of the main things that an apostle does. In one of my studies, I identified fourteen different elements in an apostle's work. The book of Acts is the Acts of the apostles. Therefore, it

was important for me to take a few minutes to give everyone a better understanding of what an apostle does.

#### **D. Types of Apostles**

One of the misunderstandings about apostles is people put them all into one category. There are actually two different types of apostles. The qualifications for each type are very different. **The first group of apostles are called the apostles of the Lamb.** In Revelation 21, John begins to describe the heavenly Jerusalem. He said, “the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” There were just twelve of them, and there will not be any added to that group. Our text today is about finding the twelfth apostle of the lamb, a replacement for Judas.

(Rev 21:14) “And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

**The second group of apostles are simply referred to as apostles.** They are called and sent out to do apostolic work, but they are not apostles of the Lamb. Much of the book of Acts is about Paul and Barnabas, who were apostles, but not apostles of the Lamb. Some theologians teach that the choosing of Matthias in our text today was a mistake, and that Paul was the twelfth apostle. There are a number of problems with that teaching. One of the problems is that there are a lot more apostles than twelve mentioned in the New Testament. Another big problem is that the Scriptures are inerrant and inspired by God. They are profitable for teaching, for reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.

Our passage today is about the choosing of Matthias as the twelfth apostle. There are three parts to our passage. First, we find the apostles waiting obediently. Second, they followed the prophetic guidance to replace Judas. Third, we have the actual selection of Matthias as the twelfth apostle of the Lamb. Let’s read our text for today.

1. The Apostles Waited Obediently
2. The Apostles Followed Prophetic Guidance
3. The Apostles Selected Matthias

(Acts 1:12-14) “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. {13} 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. {14} 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.”

(Acts 1:15-22) “At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said, {16} “Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. {17} “For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry.” {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. {19} And it became

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known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) {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.' {21} "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— {22} beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

(Acts 1:23-26) “So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. {24} And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen {25} to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." {26} And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.”

### 1. The Apostles Waited Obediently

As Donald mentioned last week, the book of Acts is a continuation of Luke. At the end of Luke, Jesus commanded the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. He said, “I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” The promise of the Father was the Holy Spirit. They returned to Jerusalem to wait until they were clothed with power from on high.

(Luke 24:49) “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Luke begins the book of Acts with that same command. In verse four, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised. Then, He clarified what being clothed with power from high really means. He said, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” They needed to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. They needed to be clothed with the Holy Spirit. They needed to be empowered by God for the work that He commanded them to do. In the same way, we need to be empowered from on high to carry out the work that He has left us to do.

(Acts 1:4-5) “Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; {5} for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Our text today begins with the apostles returning to Jerusalem. **The apostles were simply being obedient to what Jesus had commanded them to do.** They went up to the upper room where they were staying. The apostles were staying in the city until they were clothed with power.

(Acts 1:12-13a) “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. {13} When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying...”

Luke goes on to identify who was staying. He lists the remaining eleven apostles: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, Simon, and Judas the son of James. These

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eleven were staying in the upper room.

(Acts 1:13b) "... 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."

What were the eleven doing while they were waiting to be clothed with power from on high? **The apostles were all with one mind devoting themselves to prayer.** Luke said that the eleven apostles were not the only ones praying. The women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers were also praying with them. Something happened at the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. His brothers became disciples. His brothers are now with one mind devoting themselves to prayer.

(Acts 1:14) "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."

One of the biggest lessons that they learned from being with Jesus is that they needed to be continually devoted to prayer. Jesus had set a great example for them. He was constantly praying. One of the biggest lessons that the church can learn today is to be devoted to prayer. I read a survey a few years ago that said the average pastor spent less than two minutes a day in prayer. Church, we cannot expect to be clothed with power from on high if we are not devoted to prayer. We cannot expect to see God move in our generation if we are not devoted to prayer.

The Lord said in 2 Chronicles 7 that if "My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land." Church, we are His people who are called by His name. We must pray and seek His face. If we want to see God move and to forgive sins, and to heal this land, we must humble ourselves and pray. The birth of the church came out of a group of people who were called by His name who humbled themselves and prayed. We will see throughout the book of Acts that the early church was devoted to prayer. My desire is for us to be a church that is devoted to prayer.

(2 Chron 7:14) "and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

### 2. The Apostles Followed Prophetic Guidance

While they were waiting on the Holy Spirit, and praying, their numbers grew. At one of their gatherings, there were a hundred and twenty persons. Previously, there were the eleven apostles, the women, Mary and Jesus' brothers. Now, there are one hundred and twenty people gathered together to pray.

(Acts 1:15) "At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said,"

While they were assembled together, Peter has a prophetic word about the replacement of Judas. He quotes from Psalm 69:25 and 109:8. This was a prophetic explanation about what has happened and prophetic word of guidance for them to follow.



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(Acts 1:16-17) “Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. {17} “For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry.”

Luke records that Judas Iscariot bought a field with the thirty pieces of silver, the price of betraying Jesus. He adds that he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. Therefore, it became known as Hakeldama, which means, Field of Blood. (Hakeldama is a transliterated word that comes from Aramaic.)

(Acts 1:18-19) “(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. {19} 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.)”

Matthew gives us a more complete account of what happened. When Judas saw that Jesus, an innocent person, was condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. They knew it was unlawful to put the money in the temple treasury, so they bought the Potter’s Field as a burial place for strangers. All of this had been prophesied by Jeremiah. Meanwhile, Judas went away and hung himself. (Matt 27:5)

(Matt 27:3-10) “Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, {4} saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to that yourself!” {5} And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. {6} The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, “It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.” {7} And they conferred together and with the money bought the Potter’s Field as a burial place for strangers. {8} For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. {9} Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “AND THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE OF THE ONE WHOSE PRICE HAD BEEN SET by the sons of Israel; {10} AND THEY GAVE THEM FOR THE POTTER’S FIELD, AS THE LORD DIRECTED ME.”

Peter continued his prophetic word from Psalms 69 and 109 to the group which gave them guidance about what they were to do next. According to the prophecy, they were to let another man take his office. Therefore, they needed to select someone to be the twelfth apostle of the Lamb.

(Acts 1:20) “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.’”

Peter has some guidance from the Holy Spirit about how they are to replace Judas. He gives three requirements for an apostle of the Lamb.

- 1. First, the replacement must be a man.**
- 2. Second, he must have accompanied them all the time that Jesus went in and out among them.** He clarifies that time period, saying he must have been there for the baptism of John until He was taken up from them.

**3. Third, he must have also witnessed Jesus' resurrection.**

(Acts 1:21-22) "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— {22} beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

These three requirements have been used by many to say that there are no longer any apostles. They say that these are the requirements for all apostles. Unfortunately, that view is not supported by the Scriptures. If that were true of all apostles, then most of the apostles in the New Testament would not qualify to be apostles. Let's take a quick look at that list. Paul could not have been an apostle. He did not travel with Jesus. He probably did not see His resurrection. Barnabas did not travel with Jesus. Both Barnabas and Paul are called apostles.

(Acts 14:14) "But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes..."

Timothy, Titus, Sylvanus, Apollos, Andronicus, James, Silvanus, Epaphroditus, and Luke are all called apostles in the Scriptures. These men could not have been apostles according to these three requirements. But, the Scriptures call of these men apostles. I believe the Scriptures are inerrant, so I must accept that these requirements only referred to replacing the twelfth apostle of the Lamb.

There is one other person mentioned as an apostle in the Scriptures, and that is Junias. Paul tells the church in Rome to greet Andronicus and Junias, who are outstanding among the apostles. The name Junias is a female name. It is possible that Junias was a man, but it is more probable that Junias was a woman. And if Junias was a woman, she certainly did not meet the first requirement of being a man. If Junias was a man, he probably did not meet the other two requirements to be an apostle of the Lamb.

(Romans 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

We do not have time today to look at the requirements to be called as an apostle. We will get to that some other day. But, I did want to point out to you that **these requirements put forth only applied to selecting the twelfth apostle of the Lamb**. There are still apostles today. The work of apostles is not done. We still need foundations laid in churches. We still need leaders raised up. We still need gifts imparted. We still need churches set in order. We still need correction, both in our doctrine and in our practices.

**3. The Apostles Selected Matthias**

Luke records that two men were put forward, Joseph and Matthias. **The apostles prayed about the decision**, saying, "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." Many theologians do not like the fact that they then drew lots to select the twelfth apostle. But, that is what they did. **The apostles also drew lots, and it fell to Matthias.**

(Acts 1:23-26) "So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. {24} And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all

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men, show which one of these two You have chosen {25} to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." {26} And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles."

**The casting of lots is Scriptural.** In Proverbs 16:33, we see that the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. The eleven apostles trusted that this decision was from the Lord. In our culture, people do not cast lots to help them make decisions. But in the ancient cultures, casting lots was a very common practice by both the Hebrew culture and the pagan cultures. For example, when the prophet Jonah was fleeing from the Lord, the sailors cast lots to see whose fault it was that this terrifying storm had come upon them. Note that each of the sailors cried to his god. These were not Jews who believed in Yahweh; these were pagans calling out to their pagan deities. But all of them decided to cast lots to determine whose fault it was. The casting of lots was common to all the ancient cultures, not just the Jews.

(Pro 16:33) "The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD."

(Jonah 1:7) "And each man said to his mate, "Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us." So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah."

**The casting of lots was used by Joshua to determine the inheritance of each of the tribes of Israel and Judah.** The tribes did not complain about the process used to determine what land they received; they accepted the decision as coming from the Lord.

(Josh 18:6) "And you shall describe the land in seven divisions, and bring the description here to me. And I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God."

**The casting of lots was used by the Levites to determine their responsibilities and duties.** When the Levites who were skillful at singing were determining their responsibilities and duties, they cast lots. It did not matter if you were an accomplished musician or a student, everyone had duties assigned to them through the casting of lots.

(1 Chron 25:7-8) "And their number who were trained in singing to the LORD, with their relatives, all who were skillful, was 288. {8} And they cast lots for their duties, all alike, the small as well as the great, the teacher as well as the pupil."

We also find that the other Levites cast lots for their duties as gatekeepers. The gates that they were responsible for maintaining and operating were determined by casting lots. There were twelve gates in Jerusalem, three on each side. They used lots to see who got the water gate. They used lots to see who got the dung gate. There was no arguing about who got which gate. It was decided by gate.

(1 Chron 26:12-14) "To these divisions of the gatekeepers, the chief men, were given duties like their relatives to minister in the house of the LORD. {13} And they cast lots, the small and the great alike, according to their fathers' households, for every gate. {14} And the lot to the east fell to Shelemiah. Then they cast lots for his son Zechariah, a counselor with insight, and his lot came out to the north."

In the book of Nehemiah, we find that the Levites cast lots to determine who would supply the wood for the temple. The wood was needed for all the sacrifices and offerings that the priests made on

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behalf of themselves and the people.

(Nehemiah 10:34) "Likewise we cast lots for the supply of wood among the priests, the Levites, and the people in order that they might bring it to the house of our God, according to our fathers' households, at fixed times annually, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God as it is written in the law;"

As we move to the New Testament, we find that the casting of lots was still widely practiced. When Jesus was on the cross, the soldiers cast lots for his outer garments. This had been prophesied by David in Psalms 22.

(Psalms 22:18) "They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots."

(Matthew 27:35) "And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots;"

In our family, we use to cast lots every month to determine the seating arrangement at our table. Children always had their favorite seats and the casting of lots impartially determined who sat where for the whole month. It was fun and it eliminated much strife. We also cast lots for seats in the van. When we started to go anywhere, there was no fighting over who was going to sit in a particular place. Each child knew immediately where to go in the fifteen passenger van. The casting of lots made for lots of peace and order.

The casting of lots would be quite appropriate today in many churches. People could cast lots for dates that they would serve as ushers, greeters, nursery or other duties. It would be a fair and impartial method of making a schedule. The casting of lots could also be done to determine who would fill needed jobs in the church. For example, most churches have a shortage of nursery workers. Very few adults want to volunteer in this area. Mothers of young children have them all week and welcome the chance to worship without the responsibility of young children. Older parents that do not have young ones in the nursery, and the elderly do not feel it is their responsibility to work the nursery any more. Therefore, there is a need in most churches for volunteers to serve in this capacity. If a church is going to provide a nursery, it is the responsibility of all members to see that it is properly staffed. The casting of lots would be a very effective way of scheduling people for their turn in the nursery.

We flip coins today to see who kicks off first and who returns. That works with two teams. But, if you have five or six teams, flipping a coin would not work as well. But, if you drew lots, you could easily handle that decision.

### **Conclusion**

We have started an exciting study of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. This morning we have taken a brief look at apostles. Before the Holy Spirit was to be given to the church, God wanted to appoint the twelfth apostle.

We also saw this morning the importance of prayer. The apostles were continually devoting themselves to prayer. The early church continually devoted themselves to prayer. The Lord

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commands us to be devoted to prayer. The apostles were obedient to stay in Jerusalem and pray for the Holy Spirit. Are we going to be obedient to the Lord and be devoted to prayer? Are we going to stay and pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Church, if we want to see God move in our generation, we must learn to be devoted to prayer.

We also saw that the church was led by prophetic words. Those words came while they were assembled together to pray. The same is true today. When we pray and minister to the Lord, we should expect the Lord to speak to us. We want the Lord to release prophetic words to us.

In the beginning, I asked who struggled with making decisions. I would like to finish up on a few practical applications from our text on decision making.

- 1. Wait patiently.** Don't rush into decisions. Many bad decisions are made on the spur of the moment without giving any thought or prayer about the matter. The apostles waited patiently.
- 2. Be obedient to what you know to do.** What does the Scriptures tell you to do. We must make decisions based on the will of God. He has spoken to us about many things. How does the matter line up with what God has told you to do. Be obedient to what He has told us to do.
- 3. Pray about the decision.** Be devoted to prayer. Soak it in prayer. Ask God for wisdom. Ask God for direction. He says if we acknowledge Him, He will make our paths straight. He says if we ask for wisdom, He will give it to us generously and without reproach. Pray about the decision.
- 4. Get prophetic guidance.** Ask the Lord to give you prophetic understanding about the matter. Ask the Lord for prophetic guidance of what you are to do next.
- 5. Cast lots if necessary.** If you still cannot decide and the time has come to make a decision, feel free to use lots. The Scriptures say that its every decision is from the Lord. God does not command us to use lots, but He will use lots to help us. Trust God with the decision.
- 6. Make the decision and move on.** Don't keep going back and forth after making the decision. Make a decision and move on. In professional golf, if I was in between a five iron and a six iron, I needed to be committed to whatever club I chose. A right club hit without conviction would produce a bad shot. A wrong club with conviction would have better results than the right club without conviction. Make a decision and go with it.

Let's stand and pray...

**Introduction** (Acts 1:12-26)

**A. Definition of Apostle**

- An apostle is a “\_\_\_\_\_.” (Acts 13:3, 14)

**B. The Place of Apostles**

- God has appointed in the church first \_\_\_\_\_.(1 Cor 12:27-28, Matt 10:1-5)
- Apostles are people who have been called, gifted, anointed, given authority, and sent out to do a special \_\_\_\_\_.

**C. Work of Apostle**

1. Apostles \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ churches.
  - Part of planting a successful church is laying the \_\_\_\_\_. (Eph 2:20, 1 Cor 3:10-11)
  - Apostles \_\_\_\_\_ up and \_\_\_\_\_ people into ministry. (Acts 14:23)
  - Apostles \_\_\_\_\_ leaders. (1 Cor 4:14-17)
  - Apostles \_\_\_\_\_ churches. (Acts 14:22, 15:40-41)
2. Apostles set things in \_\_\_\_\_. (Titus 1:5-6)
  - Apostles solve \_\_\_\_\_. (Titus 1:10-11)
  - Apostles bring \_\_\_\_\_ when necessary. (Acts 15, 1 Cor 4:21, 2 Cor 13:10)
3. Apostles impart \_\_\_\_\_. (Rom 1:11, 2 Tim 1:5-6, 1 Tim 4:14)

**D. Types of Apostles**

- The first group of apostles are called the apostles of the \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev 21:14)
- The second group of apostles are simply referred to as \_\_\_\_\_.

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**1. The Apostles Waited Obediently (Acts 1:12-14)**

- The apostles were simply being \_\_\_\_\_ to what Jesus had commanded them to do. (Acts 1:4-5, 12-13, Luke 24:49)
- The apostles were all with one mind devoting themselves to \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 1:14, 2 Chron 7:14)

**2. The Apostles Followed Prophetic Guidance (Acts 1:15-22, Matt 27:5, Acts 14:14, Rom 16:7)**

- First, the replacement must be a \_\_\_\_\_.
- Second, he must have \_\_\_\_\_ them all the time that Jesus went in and out among them.
- Third, he must have \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus' resurrection.
- These requirements put forth only applied to selecting the twelfth apostle of the \_\_\_\_\_.

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- The apostles also drew \_\_\_\_\_, and it fell to Matthias.
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- The casting of lots was used by Joshua to determine the \_\_\_\_\_ of each of the tribes. (Josh 18:6)
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