



## Days of Preparation in Prayer (Acts 1:12-26)

*Notes: Week Three*

### Acts 1:12-26 (NIV)

#### Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

<sup>12</sup> Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk<sup>[a]</sup> from the city. <sup>13</sup> When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup> They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

<sup>15</sup> In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) <sup>16</sup> and said, "Brothers and sisters,<sup>[b]</sup> the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> He was one of our number and shared in our ministry."

<sup>18</sup> (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. <sup>19</sup> Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

<sup>20</sup> "For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms:

"May his place be deserted;  
let there be no one to dwell in it,"<sup>[c]</sup>

and,

"May another take his place of leadership."<sup>[d]</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, <sup>22</sup> 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."

<sup>23</sup> So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." <sup>26</sup> Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

#### Footnotes:

- a. [Acts 1:12](#) That is, about 5/8 mile or about 1 kilometer
- b. [Acts 1:16](#) The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 6:3; 11:29; 12:17; 16:40; 18:18, 27; 21:7, 17; 28:14, 15.
- c. [Acts 1:20](#) Psalm 69:25
- d. [Acts 1:20](#) Psalm 109:8

## Acts 1:12-26 (HCSB)

### United in Prayer

<sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a Sabbath day’s journey away. <sup>13</sup> When they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying:

Peter, John,  
James, Andrew,  
Philip, Thomas,  
Bartholomew, Matthew,  
James the son of Alphaeus,  
Simon the Zealot,  
and Judas the son of James.

<sup>14</sup> All these were continually united in prayer, <sup>[a]</sup> along with the women, including Mary <sup>[b]</sup> the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

### Matthias Chosen

<sup>15</sup> During these days Peter stood up among the brothers <sup>[c]</sup>—the number of people who were together was about 120—and said: <sup>16</sup> “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David spoke in advance about Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> For he was one of our number and was allotted a share in this ministry.” <sup>18</sup> Now this man acquired a field with his unrighteous wages. He fell headfirst and burst open in the middle, and all his insides spilled out. <sup>19</sup> This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field is called *Hakeldama* (that is, Field of Blood). <sup>20</sup> “For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

Let his dwelling become desolate;  
let no one live in it; <sup>[d]</sup> and  
Let someone else take his position. <sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>21</sup> “Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— <sup>22</sup> beginning from the baptism of John until the day He was taken up from us—from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

<sup>23</sup> So they proposed two: Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> Then they prayed, “You, Lord, know the hearts of all; show which of these two You have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take the place <sup>[f]</sup> in this apostolic service that Judas left to go to his own place.” <sup>26</sup> Then they cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias. So he was numbered with the 11 apostles.

### Footnotes:

- a. [Acts 1:14](#) Other mss add *and petition*
- b. [Acts 1:14](#) Or *prayer, with their wives and Mary*
- c. [Acts 1:15](#) Other mss read *disciples*
- d. [Acts 1:20](#) [Ps 69:25](#)
- e. [Acts 1:20](#) [Ps 109:8](#)
- f. [Acts 1:25](#) Other mss read *to share*

## Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*<sup>1</sup>

*Acts 1:12-26*

[1:13](#) [Luke 6:14-16](#) provides the same list of disciples. The lists in Mark and Matthew are similar, except for differences in the names of two disciples between Luke-Acts and Mark and Matthew. Several disciples had alternative names (Simon/Peter, Matthew/Levi; cp. [v. 23](#)), possibly accounting for differences between the lists. **Simon the Zealot** of Luke-Acts is probably Simon the Cananean, and **Judas the son of James** in Luke-Acts may be Thaddaeus.

[1:18-19](#) The differences between the two NT accounts of Judas's death (here and [Mt 27:3-8](#)) should not be overemphasized. Both agree that he died a shameful death and that a field was named after his traitorous deed. [Matthew 27:5](#) says Judas hanged himself, while the present passage says he fell **headfirst** and **burst open**. Possibly after he hanged himself, Judas's body decayed and fell from the rope, bursting open.

[1:21-23](#) The person selected to take Judas's place had to have **accompanied** the disciples throughout the course of Jesus' ministry (from His **baptism** to His ascension), thus assuring that he could speak about things he had seen personally.

[1:24-26](#) The disciples **prayed** for God to make clear to them which person He had **chosen** as a successor for Judas. The casting of **lots** was an acceptable method for making decisions in the era before the Holy Spirit was given. The sovereign Lord superintended the event, ensuring that the lot fell in such a way as to identify His chosen man.

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1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Acts 1".

## English Standard Version - Study Bible<sup>2</sup>

Acts 1:12-26

**1:12-26 Matthias Replaces Judas.** The remainder of [ch. 1](#) focuses on two events preparatory to Pentecost: the gathering of the band of followers to pray for the coming gift of the Spirit ([vv. 12-14](#)) and the selection of Matthias to replace Judas ([vv. 15-26](#)).

**1:12** A **Sabbath day's journey** was the maximum distance one could travel on the Sabbath without it constituting work. This was not an explicit OT law but a later Jewish tradition. The rabbis set the limit at 2,000 cubits (about 0.6 miles or 1 km). Jews at Qumran had a lower travel limit.

**1:14** The **women** in the upper room likely included those who ministered to Jesus' followers ([Luke 8:2-3](#)), accompanied them from Galilee ([Luke 23:55](#)), and witnessed the crucifixion and empty tomb ([Luke 23:49](#), [55-56](#); [24:2-11](#)). Jesus had four **brothers**—James, Joses, Judas, and Simon ([Mark 6:3](#)). The main activity in the upper room was **prayer**. Jesus had told them “to wait for the promise of the Father” ([Acts 1:4](#)), but “waiting” on God and prayer are closely related in several places in the OT, and therefore it is likely that they were praying constantly that the promised Spirit would descend.

**1:15** Throughout [chs. 1-15](#) **Peter** is the spokesman for the apostles.

**1:16** **The Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David** is one of the clearest affirmations in Scripture that the Bible is the inspired word of God. The Holy Spirit “spoke” through David's mouth in the sense that David's written words were inspired by the third person of the Trinity (God the Holy Spirit) foretelling events that took place a thousand years later (see [v. 20](#); cf. [Ps. 69:25](#); [109:8](#)).

**1:18** **this man acquired a field.** That is, the field was acquired indirectly by Judas, through the agency of the chief priests. As [Matt. 27:3-7](#) records, Judas brought the 30 pieces of silver back to the chief priests and elders. The chief priests then purchased the potter's field with Judas's money, with the same effect as if Judas had himself made the purchase. **he burst open.** The two accounts of Judas's death are complementary retellings of the same event, each focusing in different ways on the same details. Both accounts involve: Judas's remorse, the purchase of a field with his ill-gotten money, its reputation as “the Field of Blood,” and Judas's gory death (for the location of “the Field of Blood,” see note on [Matt. 27:7-8](#)). The main difference is that [Matt. 27:5](#) speaks of Judas hanging himself, while Acts speaks of his body **falling headlong** and bursting open with all his entrails spilling out. One possible explanation suggests that the field overlooked a cliff, and as Judas hanged himself, the rope (or the branch) may have broken, with his body falling headlong over the edge of the cliff onto jagged rocks below. Others have suggested that Judas's body may have remained hanging for some time decaying and decomposing (“swelling up,” ESV footnote), eventually falling to the ground and bursting open in its decomposed condition. In either case, there is no reason to see the two accounts as contradictory, since they focus on complementary details of the same event. In both accounts the effect of Satan's control over Judas's life is clear, demonstrating the general principle that Satan brings total destruction and disgrace to the person who comes under his control, for “he was a murderer from the beginning” ([John 8:44](#)).

**1:20** Judas's death was the fulfillment of [Ps. 69:25](#), and his place among the disciples was now empty. **Let another take his office.** The selection of Matthias ([Acts 1:26](#)) as the twelfth apostle was a direct fulfillment of prophecy (cf. [v. 16](#); [Ps. 109:8](#)), carried out under the direction of the Lord. The addition of this new twelfth apostle would complete the new nucleus for the people of God, parallel to the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel in the OT. Though these 12 would remain the core group of the apostles (see [Luke](#)

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2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Acts 1".

[22:30](#); [1 Cor. 15:5](#); [Rev. 21:12, 14](#)), a few more later became “apostles,” including at least Paul and Barnabas ([Acts 14:4, 14](#)) and James, the Lord’s brother ([Gal. 1:19](#)). However, apostles were not replaced from this point onward: in [Acts 12](#), James the brother of John was not replaced after his execution. See also note on [Rom. 1:1](#).

**1:23-24** Two men, **Joseph** and **Matthias**, met the necessary requirements to be considered for apostleship. The group turned the matter over to the “Lord” ([v. 24](#); that is, the Lord Jesus, who had chosen all the other apostles), praying that he would make his choice known.

**1:26** The **lots** were probably marked stones that were placed in a pot and then shaken out (cf. [1 Chron. 26:13-16](#)). This does not imply that people should cast lots to make their decisions today, for there is no such command in any NT letter or in any of Jesus’ earthly teachings. The appointment of a twelfth apostle was a unique situation, a choice that was made by Jesus himself. In the rest of the NT, the elders and deacons and other church leaders are chosen according to decisions made by human beings, whether by an apostle or by others in the churches (see [Acts 6:3-6](#); [14:23](#); [15:22](#); [2 Cor. 8:19](#); cf. [1 Tim. 3:1-13](#); [Titus 1:5-9](#)). On the 12 **apostles**, see note on [Matt. 10:1](#).

## NLT Life Application Study Bible<sup>3</sup>

*Acts 1:12-26*

**1:12, 13** After Christ was taken up into heaven, the disciples immediately returned to Jerusalem and had a prayer meeting. Jesus had said they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days, so they waited and prayed. When you face a difficult task, an important decision, or a baffling dilemma, don’t rush into the work and just hope it comes out the way it should. Instead, make your first step prayer for the Holy Spirit’s power and guidance.

**1:13** A “Zealot” could mean anyone zealous for the Jewish law. The Zealots may have been a radical political party working for the violent overthrow of Roman rule in Israel.

**1:14** At this time, Jesus’ brothers were with the disciples. During Jesus’ lifetime, they had not believed he was the Messiah ([John 7:5](#)), but his resurrection must have convinced them. Jesus’ special appearance to James, one of his brothers, may have been an especially significant event in their conversion (see [1 Corinthians 15:7](#)).

**1:15-26** This was the first church business meeting. The small group of 11 had already grown to more than 120. The main order of business was to appoint a new disciple, or apostle, as the 11 were now called. While the apostles waited, they were doing what they could—praying, seeking God’s guidance, and getting organized. Waiting for God to work does not mean sitting around doing nothing. We must do what we can, while we can, as long as we don’t run ahead of God.

**1:16, 17** How could someone who had been with Jesus daily betray him? Judas had received the same calling and teaching as everyone else. But he had chosen to reject Christ. Judas hardened his heart and joined in the plot with Jesus’ enemies to put him to death. Judas remained unrepentant to the end, and he finally committed suicide. Although Jesus predicted this would happen, it was Judas’s choice. Those privileged to be *close* to the truth are not necessarily *committed* to the truth. See Judas’s Profile in [Mark 14](#), [p. 1655](#) for more information on his life.

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3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1815-1816.

**1:18** Matthew says that Judas hanged himself ([Matthew 27:5](#)); Acts says that he fell. The traditional explanation is that when Judas hanged himself, the rope or branch broke, Judas fell, and his body burst open.

**1:21, 22** Many consistently followed Jesus throughout his ministry on earth. The 12 disciples were his inner circle, but others shared the disciples' deep love for and commitment to Jesus.

**1:21-25** The apostles had to choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot. They outlined specific criteria for making the choice. After finalists were chosen, the apostles prayed, asking God to guide the selection process. This gives us a good example of how to proceed when we are making important decisions. Set up criteria consistent with the Bible, examine the alternatives, and pray for wisdom and guidance to reach a wise decision.

**1:26** The disciples became *apostles*. *Disciple* means "follower or learner," and *apostle* means "messenger or missionary." These men now had the special assignment of spreading the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection.