



Acts: 1:12-26 “Decisions”

Intro:

There is some debate surrounding this passage and whether the disciples should have taken the responsibility of choosing Judas’ replacement or whether that role was ultimately meant for Paul. But in my opinion, that is not the main emphasis of the passage. When we step back and look at the bigger picture, we find the disciples in a unique transitional moment. Jesus had ascended back into heaven, and they were now waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit before being sent out as His witnesses. And it is often in seasons of transition, uncertainty, and waiting that making decisions becomes especially difficult. But what we begin to see here is the apostles slowly stepping into the responsibility Christ had entrusted to them. For the first time, they are beginning to function without Jesus physically standing beside them. They are taking what He taught them and beginning to apply it as they prepare to become the foundation of the early church. And what is interesting is not merely the decision they make, but the way they make it. In this passage, we see several important principles that surround this decision—**principles that help teach us how to make Kingdom-minded decisions while resting in God’s sovereignty and providence.**

V.12

“Then **they returned to Jerusalem** from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.”

1. **They Obeyed First**

Before the disciples made any decisions, organized any plans, or discussed replacing Judas, they first simply obeyed what Jesus had already told them to do. Jesus had commanded them to return to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4), and that is what they did.

This is important because many times we want God to give us direction while we are still living in disobedience. Yet the first step in making Kingdom-minded decisions is not figuring everything out—it is **simply obeying what The Lord has told us to do**. Something that I think is also important to note is that in this instance they had to obey about **where** God had called them to be. This is important because we often want God to give us clarity yet we are not **where** He wants us to be. *Many times the what goes after the where.*

V.13-15

“And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, *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. **All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer**, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.* In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all **about 120**) and said,”

2. **They Gathered In Unity**

Luke intentionally shows us the unity of this group because it is actually remarkable when we remember their history. The brothers of Jesus who once doubted Him were now there (John 7:5). The women who had experienced heartbreak and grief were there (Luke 24:17; John 20:11). The disciples who had scattered in fear after Jesus’ arrest were there (Matthew 26:56). The same disciples who, throughout the Gospels, were often arguing about who was the greatest, were now gathered together with one accord (Luke 22:24; Mark 9:33–34). Before, they had hidden in the upper room out of fear of the Jews (John 20:19). Now they were gathered in that same upper room waiting for the Holy Spirit who would empower them to go boldly into the world as witnesses for Christ. This is crucial because isolation always leads to poor decisions. God never intended His people to navigate life and the calling to witness alone. The early church gathered together, encouraged one another, submitted to leadership, and sought the Lord **together**. Kingdom-minded decisions are always made best in the context of godly unity and community.

3. **They Were Devoted To Prayer**

It’s important to observe that this passage doesn’t just say that they prayed but that they were DEVOTED to prayer. That means they were committed and fully given to prayer. It wasn’t a side thing but priority. Prayer was not treated as a small religious routine or a last resort after they exhausted their own wisdom. Prayer was central a central part of their life all the time (as we will see throughout this book). Let us not wait for trials or hard decisions to pray, but let us live devoted to prayer so when the hard decisions and trials come we have peace knowing we have been living in dependence on our God and we feel ready to seek His will.

V.16-22

““Brothers, **the Scripture had to be fulfilled**, which **the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas**, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it”; and “*Let another take his office*. So one of the men *who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us*—**one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.**””

4. They Leaned On Scripture

The disciples did not just live devoted to prayer but also dependent on Scripture. Jesus had spent 40 days with going through the Old Testament and connecting it to His coming (Luke 24:44-47) and now we can see them learning from this and doing the same. Peter quotes two different psalms here, Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8. This shows us that they did a deep dive into Scripture to truly seek out God’s will in it. They didn’t just pray then make their best guess, they prayed and **searched through Scripture**. And though Scripture does not tell us every detail, it almost seems as if replacing Judas was not originally even the focus of the gathering. The disciples were gathered in prayer, seeking God, and devoting themselves to Scripture, and through that process God began to bring clarity through His Word. As Peter searched the Scriptures, he recognized that what had happened with Judas was not outside of God’s plan and that Scripture itself pointed toward another taking his office. This is important because we must be careful not to treat Scripture like a “magic 8-ball” that we only run to whenever we need an answer. As Children of God we are made to live in continual relationship with Christ through His Word. And as we consistently seek Him in Scripture, God shapes our minds, directs our hearts, and leads us according to His will. **Read: Proverbs 3:5-6 and Romans 12:1-2**

V.23-26

“And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. **And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show 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.”** And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

5. They Prayed Again and Trusted God’s Sovereignty

After narrowing the decision down to two qualified men, the disciples prayed once again. And their prayer reveals something beautiful: they recognized that while they could see outward qualifications, only God truly knew the heart. This shows that they understood the decision did not belong to them—it belonged to God. Yet at the same time, they did not become passive. They acted responsibly: They obeyed, lived in unity, were devoted to prayer, and leaned on Scriptures, but in the end, they rested in God’s sovereignty over the outcome. Now, whether Matthias was the correct choice or whether they should have waited for Paul is something believers have debated for years. But what we clearly see throughout the rest of Acts is that God’s purposes still moved forward. The Gospel spread, the church grew, and the Lord continued building His Kingdom, and pouring out His love and grace on His disciples. **Read: Proverbs 16:33.**

Conclusion and Main Idea:

*As believers, we are called and responsible to seek God’s will faithfully through obedience, prayer, unity, and Scripture. **But we must also learn to rest in the sovereignty and grace of God, knowing that even in our weakness and limitations, God is still able to guide, correct, and accomplish His purposes.** This does not mean we become careless or unconcerned about obedience. *But it does mean that instead of living in paralyzing fear of making a mistake, we live in obedience knowing our God is graceful and sovereign over our mistakes.**

