

Judas' Replacement

[Acts 1:12-26](#)



We are studying the book of Acts, we're still in the first chapter. I have said that this book is about the "Redemption or resurrection of Israel." God had promised His people Israel that He would redeem them and we see that fleshed out in this book. This book focuses on the fulfillment of the promises that God made to Israel—true Israel which is the Church.

The Book of Acts takes up precisely where Luke's Gospel left off. The first eleven verses of Acts 1 deal primarily with that **forty-day period** after Jesus had risen from the dead but had not yet ascended to the Father. In our last study we saw the ascension of Christ to the Father.



Now in verses 12-26 we are going to study the only inspired account of that ten-day period of time between Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at [Pentecost](#), some fifty days after the time of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus was now physically absent, and yet the Holy Spirit has not yet descended. It was during this period of time that Jesus had told His disciples to wait:

And 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; (Acts 1:4 NASB)

So in obedience to Christ the Apostles go to Jerusalem:

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. (Acts 1:12 NASB)

So the Apostles leave the mount called Olivet and go to Jerusalem. The citing of the place where all this had occurred is a testimony to its genuineness. Luke tells us in his first volume that this takes place at Bethany, which was on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives:

And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ And it came about that while He was blessing them, He parted from them. (Luke 24:50-51 NASB)

The Mount of Olives is located on the east side of the city and is only separated from the city by the narrow Kidron Valley.

Luke says that this trip was a "Sabbath day's journey away"—the distance that was allowed to be traveled on the Sabbath without it being considered a journey. The rabbis had taken the command of [Exodus 16:29](#) - that no one was to "go out of his place on the Sabbath day" with [Numbers 35:5](#) which designated that the border of a town extended outward a distance of 2000 cubits (3000 feet or a little over half a mile) and concluded that if you limit your travel to this particular distance, then you haven't really gone out.

And when they had entered, 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. (Acts 1:13 NASB)

Most commentators believe he's referring to the same upper room that they were in when Jesus had His last

Passover meal with the disciples.

Then Luke tells us exactly who it is that was in the upper room—It is the eleven apostles. There are four lists in the New Testament, which give us the names of the Apostles chosen by Jesus: [Matthew 10:2-4](#), [Mark 3:16-19](#), [Luke 6:14-16](#), [Acts 1:13,26](#).

Let me give you a few facts about these lists of disciples. Simon Peter is always mentioned first. Judas Iscariot is always mentioned last, except in our text in Acts which doesn't mention him at all.

There are three distinct groupings of disciples. Those who were with Jesus the most are mentioned in the first group. Those who are mentioned less often are in the second group. Those in the third group are hardly mentioned at all (with the exception of Judas Iscariot).

The same person always heads up each group. Simon Peter always heads up the first group. Philip always heads up the second group. James the son of Alphaeus always heads up the third group. Let's look at these 11 men.

Group 1

1. Peter—he is always listed first among the disciples. There is no disciple of Jesus with whom we are more familiar than the person of Peter.

2. John—contrary to what most people believe John was not “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” that was Lazarus.

3. James— who is never mentioned in the gospels apart from his brother, John. James was the first martyr among the apostles ([Acts 12:2](#)).

Jesus had a special nickname for these two brothers. It was Boanerges, which is translated by Mark as meaning “sons of thunder,” with no explanation given as to why such a nickname should have been applied to them by Jesus. But as names given seem to have pointed at good characteristics, “sons of thunder” may mean thundering against sin (9:38; [Luke 9:54](#)).

4. Andrew— was Peter's brother. He was also the one who brought Peter to know Christ ([John 1:41-42](#)). He is only mentioned twelve times in the entire New Testament.

Group 2

5. Philip - This is a Greek name. He is always listed first in the second list. He brought his friend, Nathaniel, to the Lord ([John 1:43-46](#)). He is only mentioned fifteen times in the New Testament. When some Greeks wanted to come and speak to Jesus, they first went to Philip ([John 12:20-22](#)).

6. Thomas - who was also called “Didymus,” meaning: “twin,” Thomas has gotten a lot of bad press over the years. He has been labeled “Doubting Thomas” because of his reaction to the news of the resurrection of Jesus. But “Doubting Thomas” became “Believing Thomas” when he saw the risen Lord. He also gave us one of the clearest confessions of Christ's nature as God:

Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28 NASB)

7. Bartholomew— He doesn't get mentioned much, appearing only in the four lists. Commentators point out that this disciple has often been associated with the Nathanael of [John 1:43-51](#), and, if this were so, that would increase his mention by six other Scriptures.

8. Matthew - This is the Greek name of Levi. He had been a tax-collector; a turn-coat traitor who sold out his country for money. But he had given it all up to follow Jesus. Matthew's call is recorded for us in all three

Synoptic Gospels, but, apart from this, his name only occurs elsewhere in the four lists. Matthew wrote the Gospel of Matthew.

Group 3

9. James the son of Alphaeus - is distinguished from James the brother of our Lord. Some scholars believe him to be the brother of Thaddaeus.

10. Simon the Zealot - The Zealots were a political party within Judaism. They were the nationalist party. They were intent on driving the Romans from the land and restoring an independent state. But Simon's surname may have meant no more than he was zealous either for Jesus or the Law, but the reason for such a nickname has now been lost.

11. Judas the son of James— “Judas” is from - the Greek form of Judah. Matthew and Mark call him Thaddaeus. Luke calls him “Judas the son of James.” He is known in the Gospels only for asking Christ a question about revelation ([John 14:22](#)).

And when they had entered, 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. (Acts 1:13 NASB)

What's wrong with this picture? What is missing in this verse? Here we only have eleven Apostles, but we need twelve. The fact that there are twelve Apostles is very important as we can see from the amount of space given to the selecting of the twelfth. Before we look at the rest of these verses in chapter 1, I want you to take note of the proportions of the passage in light of the “principle of proportion.”

The principle of proportion begins with the premise that much more could be said about the life of our lord and the early church than has been said in writing (cf. [John 20:30-31](#); [21:25](#)). Thus, those things which are recorded are important, and those things which are given more space and attention than others should be considered more important. In short, the space devoted to any topic or doctrine is indicative of its relative importance to other truths.

Look at the principle of proportion in action in Acts, particularly in chapter 1. Of the twenty-eight chapters of Acts, only one chapter (the first) gives an account of matters prior to Pentecost. The remaining chapters depict Pentecost ([2:1-4](#)), its impact ([2:5-13](#)), its interpretation ([2:14-40](#)), and its implications (2:41–28:31).

If only one chapter is devoted to pre-Pentecost matters, this tells us something. Of all that could have been said that fits into this category, Luke chose to take up the greatest part of the chapter with an account of the selection of the twelfth apostle. It would seem to me that this must be, in the mind of Luke (and of the Holy Spirit who inspired this book), a very important incident, at least as it relates to the unfolding argument of the book.

Why do we need twelve? Speaking to the Apostles Jesus said:

And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:28 NASB)

The Apostles were to sit on twelve thrones, so there needed to be twelve of them. What is the regeneration? The period of time from John the Baptizer until the [parousia](#) is the time of the regeneration. This is the transition period.

Did these Apostles judge Israel during the transition period? The word “judge” here is the Greek word [krino](#) [kriōw], [kree'-no] which means: “to judge; a. to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong. b. to

pronounce judgment, to subject to censure.”

Did these Apostles judge Israel? Yes, they did:

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. (Acts 2:14 NASB)

Who are Peter and the eleven talking to? Men of Judea who live in Jerusalem—Israelites. Notice what they say to these Israelites:

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know--²³ this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:22-23 NASB)

Are they pronouncing an opinion concerning right and wrong? Peter and the eleven tell these men, “You killed Jesus.” That is judgement, you are guilty of killing Jesus.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people,⁹ if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,¹⁰ let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health.¹¹ "He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone.¹² "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:8-12 NASB)

Peter says, you, leaders of Israel, rejected the Corner Stone, the Messiah and there is no salvation apart from Him. Now again that is judgment. These Apostles are judging Israel.

Why twelve? Speaking of the New Jerusalem which is the Church John said:

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

Why twelve? This goes back to the very beginning of the original Israelite nation. The promise of God concerning a child had been originally given to Abram ([Gen 15:1-6](#)) and, from him, had passed through his child Isaac and then on to Jacob. From Jacob had come twelve sons who were to be the tribes that would make up the nation of Israel ([Gen 49:28](#) is the first place where the twelve sons are spoken of as “the twelve tribes of Israel”).

The nation was always considered from the time of the Exodus onwards to be one unit that was built upon the twelve sons of Jacob, even though there was a lot of swapping of which tribes were to be considered to be a part of the whole (see especially [Rev 7:4-8](#) where there is a very radical reinterpretation of which twelve tribes constitute the nation).

When Jesus came, He chose twelve individuals to symbolize the rebirth of the nation Israel. They are to be the nucleus of the new Israel, the foundation of the new people of God, the Israel of God ([Galatians 6:16](#)) and the new Temple of God:

having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, (Ephesians 2:20 NASB)

***in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.* (Ephesians 2:22 NASB)**

By choosing twelve close followers, then, Jesus was also posing quite a challenge to the established religious leadership of His day for He was inferring that the old nation of Israel had failed to achieve what it had been called by God to do, and that, even now, God was by-passing the descendants of natural lineage to begin again with a spiritual lineage which relied upon faith and forgiveness, mercy and grace, rather than upon the minute extrapolation of legal requirements which had failed the nation so abysmally.

Why twelve? Jesus is reconstituting Israel. God in Christ was starting again—this time with a new foundation—and the call was going out to all Jews to become a part of that move, to rely not on their natural descent but upon the mercy and work of God. As such, twelve disciples was the perfect number; not only to show the ending of the old but of the beginning of the new.

Let me underscore the importance of our text in chapter 1 by pointing out that the selection of the twelfth apostle is not only the only incident which Luke recorded during the ten-day period of the disciples' waiting, but it is the incident which immediately precedes Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, in chapter 2. If there is any importance by association—as there surely must be—then what comes in the immediate context of Pentecost must be important. The position of our passage is a clue to its importance.

Ten days had to pass before the coming of the Spirit, and the rest of the chapter tells us how those days of waiting were occupied:

***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 1:14 NASB)**

They spent their time together in prayer. Most of the actual praying probably took place in the Temple where they gathered daily with other disciples of Jesus:

***And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple, praising God.* (Luke 24:52-53 NASB)**

Luke says they were, “**with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer.**” This word "devoting" is the Greek word [*proskartereo*](#) [proskarterellw]. It first meant: “*to be strong towards, to endure in, persevere in.*” It came to mean: “*adhere to, persist in, to continue to do something with intense effort,*” with the possible implication of despite difficulty. The present tense of "devote" further emphasizes the idea of persistence of prayer.

There were about 120 in all, and they prayed together for about ten days. After Peter's sermon at Pentecost and the conversion of 3,000 people, Luke describes their life together like this:

***And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* (Acts 2:42 NASB)**

***"But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."* (Acts 6:4 NASB)**

Paul uses the same word for prayer in:

***rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,* (Romans 12:12 NASB)**

***With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,* (Ephesians 6:18 NASB)**

What does this mean? It means that disciples of Christ are to pray **often** and to pray **regularly**. Prayer is not to be infrequent, and prayer is not to be hit and miss. Being "devoted to" prayer means that you are not haphazard, and you are not forgetful. It means you take steps to see that it is part of your regular life, the same way eating and sleeping are.

Prayer is vital to a believer's spiritual health. Prayer is a life priority. It connects me with God and it connects me with God's provision for my life. The great preacher, [Robert Murray McCheyne](#), once wrote, "*What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more.*" That is a very powerful statement. Prayer is important!

What were the Apostles praying for as they waited for Pentecost? I think that their prayer involved who would replace Judas. They were following their Lord pattern:

And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: (Luke 6:12-13 NASB)

In his first volume Luke tells us that before Jesus chose his twelve Apostles He spent the night in prayer. How many of us spend all night in prayer? If Jesus found it necessary to do so, how much more so should we pray?

After His all-night prayer vigil, Jesus called a larger group of "disciples" to Him, from which He chose twelve, designating them as His apostles. These were to be the leaders of the church. They were to be apostles. That Jesus spent all night in **prayer** before their appointment is an indication that these names were not "pulled out of a hat" but were chosen in consultation with God the Father. I think the Apostles were doing this same thing as they prepared to replace Judas.

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 1:14 NASB)

Here we also see that Jesus' mother and brothers now also worshiped Him. The mother of Jesus is here mentioned for the last time in New Testament history. The fact that she still remained with the disciples, instead of returning to Nazareth, indicates that Lazarus was faithful to the dying request of Jesus, and continued to treat her as his own mother.

But notice, the disciples were praying WITH her, not TO her. Both the Roman Catholic as well as the Eastern Orthodox Church have instituted prayers to Mary. For centuries the Roman Catholic Church has taught that Mary is our co-redemptrix—that both she and Christ redeemed mankind, and that we need to pray to her to get Christ to listen to us. But that's not taught in the New Testament.

Luke also mentions Jesus' brothers. You remember His brothers last year when we went through the Gospel of Mark. The last time we saw His brothers was Mark chapter 3. Do you remember how they were responding to the movement of Jesus? They thought He had lost His mind. Jesus' brothers and His mother came for the express purpose of finding Jesus, bringing Him back home—because the poor man had lost His mind. They most likely didn't believe until after the resurrection.

Luke also mentions the women disciples. Many rabbis actively discouraged women from learning. The [Mishnah](#) includes some pretty cynical thoughts about women: "*May the words of the Torah be burned, they should not be handed over to women.*" [Rabbi Eliezer](#) (c. A.D. 90) said, "*If a man gives his daughter a knowledge of the Law, it is as though he taught her lechery.*"

In the first century world the role of woman disciples was a very heated debate. When women were menstruating they were unclean, and they could not be in a public gathering; this would hinder their being with a Rabbi 24/7.

So most Rabbis did not have female [talmidim](#), but [Hillel](#), who was considered a real radical, did. I think that Jesus, unlike many Rabbis of His day, had female talmidim. The Bible never says that He had a woman talmidim, but it does say that 7 different woman “sat at His feet.”

Luke constantly draws attention to Jesus’ women disciples (compare [Luke 8.2-3](#) [23.49](#), [55](#)). He fully recognized their importance and their valuable ministry in ministering to Jesus from their substance. They provided the woman’s touch. And along with Paul he saw them as on a level with male believers ([Galatians 3.28](#)).

And 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, (Acts 1:15 NASB)

The chief scene of this worship was not the upper room where the eleven were abiding, but the temple; for we learn, from Luke's former narrative, that they ***“were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.”***

Does anything stand out to you from this verse? Just six weeks earlier:

But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" (Mark 14:71 NASB)

Peter had denied Jesus and then disappeared. And now here he is the spokesman of the Apostles. One of the distinguishing marks of Christianity is forgiveness:

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32 NASB)

Believers we are forgiven and we are to be forgiving.

Notice that the total number given for those who had gathered in the Temple is 120. Is this number significant? I think that it is. The number of one hundred and twenty is twelve intensified. This signified that they were the holy remnant of Israel, and under the authority of the eleven, soon again to become “the twelve”.

When the assembly gathered to the dedication of Solomon's Temple and the Spirit of God moved into the Temple as manifested by the cloud, there were 120 priests blowing trumpets ([2 Chronicles 5:12](#)). And when the Spirit of God moves into His church as manifested through the speaking of tongues, there will be 120 voices raised in praise.

"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. (Acts 1:16 NASB)

We see in these words clearly expressed Peter’s high view of Scripture. It represented “words which the Holy Spirit spoke” and “must be fulfilled”. And it is clear that Peter had been meditating on the Scriptures and that they had brought home to him that there was a divine necessity with regard to Judas’ betrayal (compare [John 6:64](#)). He had come to see that it came within the divine plan. He, who had once rebuked Jesus for contemplating suffering ([Mark 8:32](#)), had now been brought to see that experiencing the opposition of others to God was a part of what must be expected in His service, and that among the faithful would always be those who were not reliable.

Do not miss this! The cross was no accident. It had been foretold hundreds of years before the coming of Jesus. This was central to God's grand design for the human race. And it took place exactly according to plan. This point will be made again and again throughout the book of Acts.

Not only was the cross no accident, the part that Judas played in this drama was also no accident. It was a part of

the plan of God.

"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 portion in this ministry." (Acts 1:16-17 NASB)

Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests. They wanted to arrest Jesus. They gave Judas 30 pieces of silver and he led them to Jesus. He greeted Jesus with a kiss. In this way, he showed the people whom to arrest. ([Luke 22:3-6; 47-48](#)).

(Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. (Acts 1:18 NASB)

Anything here concern you? If you read Matthew chapter 27, there's a description of Judas committing suicide by hanging himself. If you compare that with Acts 1, you might say, "It seems like there's a discrepancy. Which way did he die?" But it isn't that hard to resolve when you understand that in the first century if someone were to hang themselves, they would probably do it on a tree branch and most typically over some sort of a cliff. Because of what Judas did as a betrayer, nobody is going to touch that dead body. Nobody is going to take it down. So it would just hang there. Most likely what happened is either the rope broke or the tree branch eventually broke. And because Judas was well-seasoned, he fell and his body burst open.

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.) (Acts 1:19 NASB)

This is undoubtedly a parenthesis by Luke. Peter was addressing the very people in whose proper tongue the place was called Aceldama, and would not, of course, *translate* it to them. Hence, we can not attribute these words to him. But Luke was writing in Greek, and felt called upon to translate Hebrew words which he might use into Greek, and the fact that this is done here prove the words to be his.

"For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO MAN DWELL IN IT'; and, 'HIS OFFICE LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE.' (Acts 1:20 NASB)

The first part of verse 20 was prophesied in [Psalm 69:25](#). To say the habitation of Judas would be desolate is the same as saying he would be removed—that he would drop out. The second part of verse 20 comes from [Psalm 109:8](#), which says Judas's office or position would be filled by someone else. By quoting those two psalms, Peter reassured his fellow disciples that Judas's departure fulfilled prophecy. It wasn't an accident that circumvented God's plan.

"It is therefore 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 should become a witness with us of His resurrection." (Acts 1:21-22 NASB)

There being no other instance in the New Testament of the selection of a successor to an apostle, this is our only scriptural guide upon the subject, and therefore, it is unscriptural for any man to lay claim to the office who has not been a companion of Jesus and a witness of his resurrection. The reason for confining the selection to those who had accompanied Jesus from the beginning is because such would be the most reliable witnesses to His identity after the resurrection.

And they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. (Acts 1:23 NASB)

Barsabbas means “son of the Sabbath”, and Justus would be his Roman name. Eusebius lived from about AD 260 to AD 340. He was a writer, who wrote history. He said that the 70 disciples in Luke 10:1 included Matthias and Barsabbas. But we do not really know that.

Tradition would later see Matthias as ministering in Ethiopia and Damascus and dying as a martyr in Judaea, but how reliable such traditions are we have no means of measuring. They do, however, demonstrate that he was not totally the forgotten man.

And they prayed, and said, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two Thou hast chosen ²⁵ to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." (Acts 1:24-25 NASB)

They address the Lord as *kardiognostes* [kardiognwisthv], *the heart-knower*. They are acting in total dependence upon the Lord.

And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:26 NASB)

When people “cast lots”, they wrote people’s names on stones. They put the stones in a jar. Then they shook the jar until a stone fell out. The name on the stone was the person that they must choose. In the First Testament, God used such methods to manifest His will in a physical way (e.g., [1 Sam. 14:37-42](#)). Sometimes God would talk directly out of heaven, sometimes He spoke through prophets, and sometimes He would communicate through the [Urim and Thummim](#) stored in the breastplate of the high priest. This was the last time they cast lots in the New Testament.

Commenting on this passage one writer says, “There is good reason to conclude that God set aside the church’s choice, raising up Saul, a man that the apostles found hard to accept as a fellow-believer, let alone an apostle.” It has been supposed by some that the whole procedure was both unauthorized and invalid. But the fact that Matthias was afterward “*numbered with the eleven apostles*,” and that the whole body were from that time called “the twelve,” [Acts 4:2](#), shows that the transaction was sanctioned by the Lord.

What about Paul? If Matthias was one of the twelve where does that leave Paul? Good question. When Israel came out of Egypt how many tribes were there? When the Exodus came about from Egypt, there was a slight rearranging of these tribes in that Levi became a distinct and separate priestly tribe given over to the service of God, and the tribe of Joseph was split into Manasseh and Ephraim, his two sons. But the foundational structure of there being twelve sources through which each Israelite could trace their Jewish origins remained.

Just as technically there were thirteen tribes in the time of Joseph, with his two sons taking his place; that is what we find in the New Testament. Judas is replaced with Matthias and then Paul is added.

and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. (1 Corinthians 15:8 NASB)

Luke concludes by noting that the full complement of the twelve apostles has been restored. Here is the new Israel, the True Israel. Here we see our theme “[the restoration of Israel](#)” being demonstrated. And now the New Israel is ready for Pentecost. From then on we see them judging Israel.

How many wrong decisions would we make if we followed the example of the disciples found in this text? The disciples were in obedience, they were in fellowship, they were in prayer, they were in the Word, they wanted to do God’s will, they used sanctified common sense, they did what Jesus would do, and they did what they could do to rely on God. Sounds like a good way to live.

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