

*additional information on the topic of casting lots*], and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Commentary: Thinking about the choice between Barsabbas and Matthias, *could the apostles have found God's choice in the Bible?* No. Therefore, they sought His decision *through the casting of lots*. We plan to do the same today in regard to our worship schedule for July and August.

**Conclusion**: God always knows best; that is why Jesus prayed: “...not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42 NIV) Think about that: God willed that His only Son would be †arrested, †put on trial, †beaten, and †crucified; then, *while Jesus was on the cross*, He received our sins and God's punishment; then, *when His work was finished*, Jesus laid down His life!

*That is shocking, radical, and illogical*; nevertheless, it was God's plan to save us from our sins! Therefore, *even when God's will doesn't square with our will*, may we accept it and be at peace – *knowing it is best!* And all God's people said: *Amen!*

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#### **What will be our Worship Schedule for July and August 2010?**

- ONLY Sunday at 8:15 & 10:45
- Sunday at 8:15 & 10:45 AND Monday at 7:00
- Sunday at 9:00 (BC & SS at 10:30) AND Monday at 7:00

#### **What Pews will be Available for Seating for July and August 2010?**

- All will be available
- All will be available *except the last three (3) on each side*
- All will be available *except the last six (6) on each side*

## Biblical Decision-Making – Part 3



# “Prayer”

Based on Acts 1:15-26 NIV



4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2010  
June 20 → 9:00 – Father's Day!

**Introduction**: Dear friends in Christ, today is part 3 of a series called: Biblical Decision-Making. **So far we have looked at:**

- Part 1 → The Biblical practice of casting lots – *a fair way to make a decision and also a way to put a decision completely into God's hands.*
- Part 2 → The interesting account of Gideon and his fleece – *once unusually wet and once unusually dry.*

**Today we focus on an account in Acts chapter 1, which includes:**

- A dilemma – *the need to replace Judas.*
- Identifying the qualified candidates – *Barsabbas and Matthias.*
- Going to God in prayer – *to ask for God's decision.*
- Casting lots – *to receive God's decision.*

1. **A dilemma – the need to replace Judas:** <sup>15</sup> In those days *[between Jesus' ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit]* Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) <sup>16</sup> and said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David *[in the Psalms]*

concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus *[by leading them to the garden of Gethsemane; then identifying Jesus with a kiss]*--<sup>17</sup> he was one of our number *[one of the 12 apostles]* and shared in this ministry."<sup>18</sup> (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field *[yes, in a way he did; with the money he returned to the chief priests and elders, they bought the field – see Matthew 27:3-10]*; 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 *[69:25]*," 'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, 'May another take his place of leadership *[109:8]*.'"

Commentary: So the apostles were 12; then, after Judas' death, they were 11; also, they believed they should fill the vacant position. At Bethlehem we also have a slight dilemma – *what should be our worship schedule in July and August?*

2. **Identifying the qualified candidates – Barsabbas and Matthias:**<sup>21</sup> "Therefore *[Peter continued]* it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,<sup>22</sup> beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us *[Peter just stated the qualifications: 1 – a man; 2 – a man who has been with us from Jesus' baptism (the beginning of His ministry) to His ascension]*. For one of these *[in other words, one of the men who meet the qualifications]* must become a witness with us of his resurrection *[-- a very key event because it proved His claims – Son of God, Savior, forgiveness through faith – to be true]*."<sup>23</sup> So they proposed

two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias *[though others may also have been qualified]*.

Commentary: At Bethlehem we have tried to identify three potential worship schedules for July and August. Every schedule has both *advantages and disadvantages*; furthermore, every schedule is *liked* by some and *disliked* by others – *some people may have had some of those same feelings toward the candidates who were qualified to replace Judas.*

3. **Going to God in prayer – to ask for God's decision:**

<sup>24</sup> Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart *[literally, in the Greek: "Lord, Heart-knower of all men"]*. 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 *[Did you notice what it said? God had already made the choice between Barsabbas and Matthias, the disciples were merely asking God to make His choice, His decision known to them]*."

Commentary: *Many people pray!* Prayer is simply speaking to God in words and thoughts. However, *few people listen for God's answers!* Some people speak in this manner: "I prayed; then I had a strong feeling, so I went with the feeling – *believing it to be a sign from God!*" Dear friends in Christ: Let us not be deceived by our feelings – *even when they are powerful*; instead, when we seek God's will, *let us listen to the answer from His Word!* <sup>NIV</sup> **Psalm 119:105** "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

4. **Casting lots – to receive God's decision:**<sup>26</sup> Then they cast lots *[see Biblical Decision-Making – Part 1 for much*