JESUS' LAST DAY ON EARTH
ACTS 01:06–11

Introduction

This was Jesus' last day on earth. What He did is a most powerful and critical message for believers.

I. The disciples came together again (v. 6).

II. Scene 1: Jesus promised the kingdom (vv. 6-7).

III. Scene 2: Jesus assigned the believers' great task — the great commission (v. 8).

IV. Scene 3: Jesus ascended before the disciples' very eyes (v. 9).

V. Scene 4: the prophecy of Jesus' return (vv. 10-11).

I. *Acts 01:06 Gathering of the Disciples*

The disciples came together again. This is apparently a different occasion, a specific time planned by Christ when He would ascend back into heaven. He must have arranged for the apostles to gather all the disciples together (over five hundred) at one location. What He had to announce would be a momentous occasion (see 1 Cor. 15:6).

II. *Acts 01:06–07 Promise of the Kingdom*

The first scene — Jesus promised the kingdom. Picture the scene: over five hundred disciples stood in some remote spot, probably on the top of a mountain. They surrounded Christ. One of the disciples asked Christ a revealing question: "Was He now going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Was that the reason He had called everyone together, the reason for His stressing the importance of the meeting so much?"

The revealing thing is this: the disciples were still thinking in terms of an earthly, physical Messiah, of a physical and material rule and reign for themselves and their nation, Israel. (See *Messiah,* Mt. l:18.*)*

We must always remember this: Christ *is going to set up His kingdom on earth.* There is a future aspect to His kingdom as well as a present rule and reign in human hearts. His rule and reign will be done on earth. The Lord's prayer assures this (see Mt. 6:10). Christ promised the apostles they would sit upon thrones judging the people of Israel. He also promised believers they would receive a hundredfold and rule over the world. (See notes, Mt. 19:27-30; Lk. 16:10-12; Rev. 14:13; 21:24-27.) But the concern of the believer is not to be a reward, not to be a carnal craving for...

- position and influence
- money and possessions
- rule and reign
- authority and power
- recognition and prestige
- the material and physical

The believer's concern is to be service and ministry, proclaiming the glorious salvation of Christ and meeting the cry of a world buried in desperate needs. Christ is direct, rebuking those who wish to pry into the timing of the Lord's return and the setting up of His kingdom upon earth. Christ had said that even He did not know when He was to return and set up the kingdom. He rebuked the question...

- "It is not for you to know."
- "The Father has set [the times] by His own authority."

Thought 1. Believers are not to be focusing upon prophecy and the setting of dates. They are not to be craving for release from this world and for the heavenly positions of authority. What believers are to do is to look for Jesus' return and long for heaven. But even this — even the love of Jesus' return — is not to get in the way of the believer's task, the task Christ discusses in the next point. What is the task? It is the task of witnessing. Believers are to focus upon witnessing, upon sharing the glorious gospel of salvation with the world.

Mark 13:32 *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*

John 13:7 *Jesus replied. "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."*

John 16:12 *"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear."*

1 Cor 13:12 *Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

Rev 5:3 *But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.*

III. *Acts 01:08 The Great Commission: Witnessing with Power*

The second scene — Jesus assigned the believers' great task, the great commission. Note three significant factors:

1. The believer's equipping power was to be the Holy Spirit. The disciples had asked about the kingdom, the positions of leadership and authority Christ had promised. The point is critical and to be noted with all diligence. They were to receive power, but not the power of this earth, not the power of...

   - position
   - fame
   - recognition
   - wealth
   - supervision
   - politics

   Their power was to be spiritual and supernatural. It was to be the very power...

   - of God Himself,
   - of the Supreme Being of the universe,
   - of His presence,
   - of His Spirit

God's very own Spirit was to dwell within the heart and life of the believer. No greater power could ever be possessed by anyone. This is clearly seen: once the early disciples experienced the coming of God's Spirit into their being, they *never again asked* about earthly power. Experiencing the presence and power of God within their lives was the summit, the supreme experience of their lives. Nothing else was ever needed. It is this for which the human heart craves, and once God's Spirit truly dwells within a person, that person is supremely fulfilled and satisfied. Nothing else can ever satisfy — not position or authority, recognition or fame — not if the person has truly received the Spirit of God into his heart and life.

The point is this: the believer is given a task by God, a mission to carry out on earth. However, the believer does not have the power to carry out that task. The power of God Himself, of His Spirit, is needed. Therefore, Christ promises, "You will receive power *when* the Holy Spirit comes on you." Both the Spirit of God and His power are promised. But take note: the Holy Spirit comes upon believers as an *equipping power.* The major purpose for His coming is to *equip* the believer to carry out his task for God.

2. The believer's task is a great one: to tell people about God. The disciples had asked about the coming of the kingdom, just when the kingdom would come. When would believers be gathered and cloistered together in the fellowship and worship of God, free from worldly injustices and sin? Again, Christ had promised the kingdom, a day when He would gather all believers together in perfect fellowship and service of God. He promised a day when believers would be freed from the world, from its sin and shame, death and hell. But again, note: now is *not the time* to be cloistered together...

   - in heaven
   - in the eternal kingdom of God
   - in Christian societies
   - in the church

   Now is *not the time* for believers to be reveling in the love and fellowship, the enjoyment and comfort of each other. This is the crux of what Christ is saying. It *is time* for...

   - WITNESSING TO THE LOST
   - BEARING WITNESS TO THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD AND CHRIST

   Witnessing about Christ, sharing the glorious salvation found in Him, is the great task of the believer. This is understandable, clearly seen, for no greater truth exists in all the universe. Man can now live forever; man can now be delivered from sin, death and hell. Just think about it! The perfect cure...

   - for sin has been secured
   - for death is known
   - for hell now exists

   There is no reason for the world — no reason for any person — to suffer any longer under the weight and bondage of...

- selfishness and hoarding
- war and power
- fear and anguish
- killing and maiming
- guilt and shame
- bitterness and hatred
- emptiness and loneliness
- inadequate supply and hunger
- insecurity and low self-esteem
- ignorance and the unknown

(God have mercy upon all who know the cure and keep silent! No greater indictment against a person exists.)

Now note several points.

a. The word "you": it is the believer who is to witness. It is the believer who knows the cure, the truth of salvation.

b. The words "my witnesses": Christ is the message, not a man's ideas, not even the idea of religion. "Christ crucified" is the believer's testimony (1 Cor. 1:23. See 1 Cor. 1:18, 24; Gal. 6:14.)

c. The word *witness* (Greek, martys): this is the same word as martyr. The believer is to be so committed to reaching men that he is ready to die as a martyr if need be. (See *Witnessing*, Acts 1:8.)

d. The word *witness*: this is not a command. Rather, it is a natural result of the Holy Spirit within a person. So is power. The Lord says very simply that a Spirit-filled person has power and becomes a witness for Him throughout the world. This is important, for it makes power and witnessing trademarks of Christian believers. A genuine believer possesses both the Spirit and power in his life and becomes by nature a witness for the Lord.

3. The believer's method: Jesus gives the method that the believer is to follow in his witness and for the spread of the gospel.

a. The believer is to witness where he is (Jerusalem) and move progressively outward (Judea and Samaria) until he is having a part in reaching the ends of the earth. Every believer...

- is to go as far as he can personally go
- is to give as sacrificially as he can for others to go
- is to use and support every means he can to reach the world

b. The believer is to witness where he is first, see to it that Christ is well known throughout his home and community before moving on. But once Christ is well known, the believer is to move out, ever pressing outward from where he is. His first witness is to be...

- in Jerusalem: where he is, his home and local community. (See *Home Evangelism*, Lk. 9:4.)

- in all Judea: other communities and areas and cities and states. Note the words "all Judea."
- in Samaria: other states and provinces where people are antagonistic. There was bitter hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Yet Christ tells His witnesses to carry the message of salvation even to their enemies. (See *Samaritans,* Lk. 10:33.)
- to the ends of the earth: to the unknown countries and regions of the world.

A critical point is this: the believer is to see that each area receives the message of Christ. He is to stay there and reach out. But once the area knows the message, the message is to be carried out into another area.

Thought 1. What a difference world evangelization would experience if each believer would simply do what Christ says.

ACTS 01:08 WITNESSING

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ***Acts 1:08***

The word "witness" in the book of *Acts* is forceful, revealing the duty of the believer.

Acts 1:8 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Acts 2:32 *God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.*

Acts 2:40 *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."*

Acts 3:15 *You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.*

Acts 4:33 *With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.*

Acts 5:32 *"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."*

Acts 8:25 *When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.*

Acts 10:39-43 *"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all*

the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen — by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Acts 13:31 *And for many days he was seen by those who had travelled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.*

Acts 14:3 *So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.*

Acts 18:5 *When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.*

Acts 20:21 -24 *I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.*

Acts 22:18 *And saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'*

Acts 22:20 *'And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'*

Acts 23:11 *The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."*

Acts 26:16 *'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.'*

Acts 26:22 *But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen.*

Acts 28:23 *They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.* ❐

IV. *Acts 01:09 Ascension of Jesus Christ*

The third scene. Jesus ascended before the disciples' very eyes. Note Jesus' last words on earth (Acts 1:8). His concern was reaching the world for God. Now note what happened. Immediately after speaking the words, the most dramatic event began to happen. Jesus Christ began to slowly arise from the earth, ascending ever upward toward the sky above. The disciples were shocked and spellbound, gazing at the spectacular sight. They were beholding one of the most dramatic and phenomenal events ever experienced:

=> the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

=> the return of God's Son into heaven, into the spiritual world and dimension of being.

Note the words *before their very eyes* (v. 9, bleponton) and *they were looking intently* (atenizontes esan). The Lord ascended somewhat slowly in a dramatic, spectacular fashion. Why depart in this way? For the sake of the disciples. There are several significant reasons why they needed such a dramatic departure. (See *Jesus Christ, Exaltation,* Acts 2:33-36.)

1. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His final departure. Since His resurrection He had been appearing and disappearing spontaneously, at will, as though by thought or light. This departure was to be final. He would never return again, not as He had been doing. Therefore this departure needed to be different; it needed to be impressed and enforced in the minds and consciences of the disciples once and for all.

2. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His claim upon the disciples. This was the last time He would have to confirm His claims while on earth. He wanted the disciples to have additional confirmation, a most dramatic confirmation that He was exactly whom He claimed to be. By actually ascending upward He was proclaiming seven glorious truths beyond all question.

a. He is the ascended Lord. (See *Lord,* Acts 2:36.)

b. He is the ascended Mediator between God and man. (See notes, Jn. 10:7-8; 12:44-46; *Jesus the Way,* Jn. 14:6; *Jesus the Truth,* Jn. 14:6; *Jesus the Life,* Jn. 14:6; notes, Jn. 14:13-14; 1 Tim. 2:3-7. See Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24.)

c. He is the ascended Advocate of man before God. (The word *advocate* [parakleton] is the very same word used for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter [parakletos]. See *Comforter,* Jn. l4:16 for meaning. See Jn. l4:26; 15:26; 16:7.)

=> The Holy Spirit is God's Advocate on earth with men.

=> Jesus Christ is man's Advocate with God. (See note, 1 Jn. 2:l-2.)

d. He is the ascended Son of God, the One who came "out of" heaven to earth to save man (see notes, Jn. 3:31; 3:32-34; 6:33; 7:25-31; *Incarnation of Jesus Christ,* Jn. 8:23; note, Heb. 7:25).

e. He is the ascended High Priest of God who makes reconciliation for the sins of men (Heb. 2:17-18. See 1 Jn. 2:l-2.)

f. He is the ascended High Priest who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities and delivers and succors us through all trials (Heb. 2:15-16. See Rom. 8:31-39; Heb. 2:17-18.)

g. He is the ascended Christ (Messiah) who makes intercession for us (Rom. 8:34; see 8:31-39).

3. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His return to earth, that it shall take place exactly as He said. (See note, Acts 1:10-11.)

4. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce that the disciples were not to be standing around "looking intently up into the sky." They were to get to the business at hand. They were to return to the upper room and...

   - "wait" and pray for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
   - move out witnessing to a world lost and reeling in desperate need.

   Mark 16:19 *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.*

   Luke 24:51 *While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.*

   Acts 1:9 *After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.*

   Heb 4:14 *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*

   Heb 9:24 *For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*

   1 Pet 3:22 *Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand — with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*

V. *Acts 01:10–11 Promise of the Return of Jesus Christ*

The fourth scene. There was the prophecy of Jesus' return. Note that God had two men appear, standing by the disciples. They were dressed in white clothing which is the colour of angels' clothing (see Mt. 28:3; Jn. 20:12). These two messengers from God said three significant things about Jesus' return.

1. This "same Jesus" shall return just as He left. He shall not return in some strange way, in a way that He might be unrecognized and missed. He shall return in the clouds of heaven and every eye shall "see Him" (Rev. 1:7).

   Note exactly what Scripture says about how Christ ascended.

=> Acts 1:9 says a cloud *hid Him* (hupelaben). The Greek word literally means took, lifted, supported Him.

=> Luke 24:51 says He was *taken up* (anephereto) into heaven. The Greek means borne up, taken up.

=> Acts 1:2; 1:11; 1 Tim. 3:16 says He was *taken up* (anelempthe).

The point is this: it is as though the cloud *hid and took Him* (hupelaben). The cloud was apparently the Shekinah glory (see note 2, Jn. l:14). Christ had said He would return to earth in the clouds of heaven (Mt. 24:30; 26:64; Mk. 13:26; see Rev. 1:7). Seeing such a dramatic ascension confirmed for the disciples (and for us) that Jesus' promise of returning to earth will take place just as He said.

2. This "same Jesus" is the One who will come back. He will not be different, either in Person or in attitude. He will be the same.

=> He will be the *same Jesus*, the same Lord and Saviour, the same One who came to earth to save men.

=> He will be the *same Jesus* in attitude, still loving and caring for those who follow Him.

=> He will be the *same Jesus* who promised to return and receive believers unto Himself that they may be with Him where He is (Jn. 14:2-3).

Mat 16:27 *"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done."*

Mat 24:27 *"For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."*

Mat 25:31-32 *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."*

Mat 26:64 *"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."*

Luke 12:40 *"You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."*

Luke 21:27 *"At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."*

Acts 1:11 *"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

1 Th 5:2 *For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.*

1 Cor 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

1 Tim 4:1 *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*

Heb 10:37 *For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay."*

James 5:8 *You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.*

Jude 1:14-15 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

Rev 16:15 *"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."*

3. This *same Jesus* who will return is the One who ascended into heaven. The Jesus in heaven is the same Jesus the disciples knew — the One who was their Lord and Saviour; the One who came to earth to be their close companion, their Advocate, their Mediator, their Representative before God. Therefore when He returns, He will be coming back to receive all believers unto Himself. He will be coming back that we may all be where He is (Jn. 14:2-3).

   John 14:2-3 *"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*

   1 Th 4:16-18 *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.* ■

JUDAS' FATE AND REPLACEMENT: CHOOSING CHURCH LEADERS
ACTS 01:12–26

Introduction

This is an instructive passage on choosing church leaders.

I. The essentials to choosing church leaders (vv. 12-15).

II. The need for church leaders: Judas' fate and empty office (vv. 16-20).

III. The choosing of church leaders: the replacement for Judas (vv. 21-26).

I. *Acts 01:12–15 Essentials to Choosing Church Leaders*

The essentials to choosing church leaders. There are six essentials seen in this passage.

1. Essential 1: To obey Jesus. The disciples had just witnessed the ascension on the mount of Olives (see *Mount of Olives*, Lk. 21:37). They now obeyed Christ by returning to Jerusalem. And note: their obedience took tremendous courage, for Jerusalem was the very centre of opposition against Christ. They were risking their lives to obey Christ. It would have been much easier to go elsewhere and wait upon and serve God there. But Christ had made His will known and the disciples had committed their lives to obeying Him.

   Thought 1. In choosing church leaders, believers have to be in the will of God; they must do the will of God. They cannot know who God's choice for a leader is unless they are obeying Him. Disobedient and carnal believers end up with disobedient and carnal leaders, that is, with leaders who are fleshy and worldly. They know little if anything about God, His will, and the true spiritual matters of the church and its mission.

2. Essential 2: To centre around the appointed leaders. Note that all eleven of the apostles were present, and they were even meeting in the upper room where the apostles were staying. The building was large, for there were over 120 disciples gathering there (v. 15).

   Thought 1. Leaders appointed by Christ are to be *the leaders* of the church, and believers must be centred around them if they wish God's presence and blessings. Too often however, too many turn to other leaders, leaders less godly, less spiritual and less mission, evangelistic, and ministry-minded. The result is a dead, formal, self-centred or worldly and socially minded church. (Note: there is a huge difference between being ministry-minded and social-minded. The difference is the same as the great gulf between the spirit and the world itself.)

=> Being ministry-minded means reaching out to help people both socially and spiritually, leading people to an evangelistic encounter, to a personal relationship with Christ as well as meeting their physical and social needs.

=> Being social-minded means reaching out to help people with *little* if any attention given to evangelism. A social gospel seldom stresses the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The church must *have* and *follow spiritual leaders,* leaders chosen and appointed by God, if the church is to be a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Essential 3: To be joined constantly in prayer (see *Joined Together,* Acts 1:14). The disciples were in the upper room for one reason: to seek and wait upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

   Thought 1. Believers must be of one spirit and mind, focusing their thoughts and concentrating as strongly as they can upon the same purpose. They have one purpose in mind, to seek God for the promise of His Spirit and His presence.

4. Essential 4: To pray *steadfastly* (proskarterountes). The word is strong. They continued, persevered, endured, persisted, stuck to praying. For what? For the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They would not cease or stop praying. God's very special presence and power, His very own Spirit and power, had been promised to them; and they were not going to stop praying until God baptized them in His Spirit and presence. (What a lesson for us!)

5. Essential 5: To have a leader who willingly leads. Peter had failed his Lord and failed Him in a terrible way, tragically denying Him. He had emotionally dropped into the dregs of despair and anguish (see note, Mt. 26:69-75). He could have easily remained defeated, allowing the glances and criticisms of the believers to keep him down, never serving his Lord again. But note: he had gotten up off the ground of despair and defeatism: He was standing forth, willingly serving Christ *exactly* where Christ had originally appointed him to serve. Peter's sin and the public's criticism were not keeping him away from his Lord, nor from serving his Lord. He had failed and failed miserably, but the Lord in His unbelievable mercy and grace had forgiven him and lifted him up, and now the Lord was ready to use Peter as originally planned.

   Thought 1. Note that Peter willingly stepped forth. He did not step forth by constraint nor out of fear. Compare what he later said to the leaders of the church.

   1 Pet 5:1-3 *To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*

6. Essential 6: To heed what the leader says. All 120 believers listened and gave heed to Peter's leadership. No leader could lead unless the people were *willing* to follow. God's presence and blessings depended upon the believers following the leader God had given them.

ACTS 01:14 JOINED TOGETHER (HOMOTHUMADON)

> *They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.* ***Acts 01:14***

The same mind or spirit; oneness of mind and heart. It means to be one in spirit and purpose. *Homos* means same and *thumos* means spirit or mind. The believers, all 120 of them in the upper room, were of the same spirit, of the same mind. The idea is they were after the same thing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were focusing and concentrating their thoughts and energies upon seeking God for the promise of His Spirit.

The word is used only eleven times in Scripture, ten of those times are found in Acts, one is found in Romans.

=> Joined together in prayer (Acts 1:14; 4:24).

=> Joined together in one place (Acts 2:1).

=> Joined together in daily worship and the Lord's supper (Acts 2:46; 5:12).

=> Joined together in obedience (Acts 8:6).

=> Joined together in a business meeting (Acts 15:25).

=> Joined together is needed to glorify God (Rom. 15:6).

The phrase and the idea of being "joined together" is also used to refer to the unity of unbelievers and to the enemies of the gospel (Acts 7:57; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29). □

ACTS 01:14 JESUS CHRIST, FAMILY

Note who was present in the upper room.

1. The eleven apostles.
2. The women, probably including the wives of the apostles and the other women who followed Jesus Christ (Lk. 8:2-3; Mt. 27:55; 27:61; 28:9f; Mk. 15:40, 47; 16:1; Lk. 23:49, 55; 24:1).
3. Mary, the mother of Jesus.
4. The brothers of Jesus: James, Joseph (Joses), Simon and Judas (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3). Before the resurrection they rejected Jesus' claims, but after His resurrection they became believers. James was given a personal appearance and revelation by the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:7). He became the pastor of the great church in Jerusalem. □

II. *Acts 01:16–20 Need for Church Leaders*

The need for church leaders — Judas' fate and empty office. The church had an empty office because one of its leaders had died a tragic death. And note, Judas had been a

leader; he had held one of the highest positions, that of being treasurer for the Lord Himself. (See note, Jn. 12:4-8.)

Peter briefly covered why the office in the church was to be filled.

1. Judas had betrayed Christ, had actually become the *guide* for Jesus' enemies (see Mt. 26:47f; Lk. 22:47; Jn. l8:2f). He should have guided people to receive Christ; instead, he had guided them to reject and deny Him and to remove Christ from the scene.

2. Judas had been called by Christ to serve in the ministry. He had been given a part in the ministry. He had been *numbered* and counted by all as being an apostle and a leader among God's people. Yet, he had somehow refused God's grace — the grace that truly *saved* and *sanctified*, that caused a person to diligently believe and seek God, to truly follow and live for Him.

   Thought 1. Unless a person is truly saved and sanctified, he is not acceptable to God. It is not enough...

   - to claim and profess God.
   - to hold an official office in the church, even the highest of offices.
   - to be a minister or leader.
   - to be an associate with other believers.
   - to be a faithful church member.
   - to be active in ministering.

3. Judas had given his heart over to greed, becoming corrupt, selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver. (See notes, Mt. 26:15.)

4. Judas had died a terrible death: he had hanged himself in despair. (The rope had broken and he had fallen head first. His body had just burst open. The picture is given in descriptive terms to match the terrible deed of betraying Christ.)

5. Judas' legacy is tragic. Everyone, even the reader, knows the terrible legacy of Judas' life, the legacy of betrayal. Betraying Christ is the most terrible legacy a man can ever have. (A warning for all!)

6. Judas' terrible fate was an eternal loss. This verse is a quote from Psa. 69:25; 109:8 (see Psa. 41:9; Zech. 11:12). Note two things:

a. The phrase *his place* (he epaulis autou) is descriptive. It means a farm house or a place for sheep such as a pasture or sheep-yard. The idea is that Judas would never again be allowed to be the farmer (husbandman) or shepherd for God.

b. The word *leadership* (episkopen) means overseeing. It is the word from which the office of bishop is taken. The idea is that Judas' office of *overseeing* the flock of God was to be filled by another person. Judas had lost his ministry completely.

Thought 1. What happened to Judas serves as a warning to every Christian leader. Judas had every opportunity imaginable, even that of brushing shoulders with the Lord Jesus day by day, yet he deserted Christ.

1 Tim 1:19 *Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.*

1 Tim 4:1 *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*

Heb 3:12 *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*

2 Pet 3:17 *Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.*

III. *Acts 01:21–26 Choosing Church Leaders*

The choosing of church leaders — the replacement for Judas.

1. Leaders must be associates; they must be in fellowship with other believers over a long period of time. Peter definitely said they must not be novices; they must not be new believers not yet grounded in the faith. People must not be chosen to be leaders until they are mature in the Lord and have proven to be genuine.

   1 Tim 3:6 *He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.*

2. Leaders must know the Lord Jesus personally. They must have personal knowledge of Jesus Christ — be a witness of His resurrection power. A leader...
   - must not only know about Jesus, but know Jesus.
   - must not only profess Jesus, but possess Jesus.
   - must not only believe Jesus lived, but know Jesus lives.
   - must not only read the story of Jesus, but live the life of Jesus.
   - must not only walk after a religion of Jesus, but follow Jesus, the risen Lord Himself.
   - must not only be willing to lead others, but be leading others already (no matter how few).
   - must not only talk about witnessing, but witness.
   - must not only want the resurrected power of God, but already know the power of God.

   Note the two names put forth and nominated. They were men highly esteemed by the earliest believers. Nothing else is known about them.

Isa 43:10 *"You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me."*

Mark 3:14 *He appointed twelve — designating them apostles — that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.*

3. Leaders must be appointed through prayer. God must be sought for two very clear, but often neglected reasons.

a. God alone knows the human heart. A person's heart cannot be truly known by others. Only God can see within. Men can be fooled; and that fact was perfectly clear, for Judas had deceived the early believers, drastically so. It was perfectly clear they could choose a counterfeit, a carnal believer. They had to seek God, for He alone knew what was in the heart of man (Jn. 2:24-25).

b. God alone had the right to choose. The church, the office, the mission was His. God alone knew whom He wanted to fill the office. They had to ask in order to find out God's will.

John 15:16 *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."*

Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel."*

Acts 13:2-3 *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.*

Thought 1. Note the strong lesson on prayer in this fact. God's will cannot be known apart from seeking to know His will.

Mark 11:24 *"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."*

1 John 3:22 *And receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.*

Jer 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

4. Leaders were appointed by the congregation, not by the leaders themselves. It was not just the eleven apostles who chose the twelfth apostle. What Peter and the 120 disciples did is clear. Peter called for nominations (v. 21), the whole group cast their lots and voted for whom they thought God wanted. It was a congregational or democratic process. ■

Acts 01: 26 Casting Lots

Just what was involved in "casting lots" is not really known. It was a method allowed in the Old Testament for making decisions under God's guidance (Lev. l6:8; Num. 26:55; Prov. 16:33). It seems that everyone either wrote his choice down, or else the choices were written just once and placed in a vase, shaken up (much like dice), and then one was picked out. Despite the chance involved, this must be remembered: every name placed in the vase was qualified in the eyes of the church. Therefore, any one of the nominations was capable of serving as a leader. However, by casting lots, there was great trust that God would overrule the lots, seeing that His choice was picked. ❐