

Acts 1.15-26: Adding Matthias to the Eleven Apostles

In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,¹⁶ "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.¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry."¹⁸ (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.¹⁹ 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.)²⁰ "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.' (Acts 1:15-20)

Introduction

The general context of Peter's address to the "brothers" is a simple listing of the apostles by name with one name omitted. There is no comment; eleven are listed with Judas Iscariot missing from the list (1.13).

I. Background of the addition of Matthias, 15

(General time: 40 days after the resurrection, plus some of 10 days, Peter, 120 brothers)

II. Peter's appeal to Scripture for the addition of Matthias, 16-22

Specific context: Peter's comment on the necessity of prophetic fulfillment regarding Judas, 16-17 (It had to be; As the speech of the Spirit; Through David; About the betrayal of Jesus by Judas who had been numbered with the twelve) and Luke's comment about the gory death of Judas, 18-19. Q: how do Peter's quotes (v. 20) support his claims about what had to be fulfilled concerning Judas? ²⁰ "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.' He cites Ps 69 & 109.

Psalm 69

*To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. Of David. Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck.*² I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.³ I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.⁴ More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore?⁵ O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.⁶ Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel.⁷ For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face.⁸ I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons.⁹ For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.¹⁰ When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach.¹¹ When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them.¹² I am the talk of those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me.¹³ But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness.¹⁴ Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters.¹⁵ Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me.¹⁶ Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.¹⁷ Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me.¹⁸ Draw near to my soul, redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies!¹⁹ You know my reproach, and my shame and my dishonor; my foes are all known to you.²⁰ Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none.²¹ They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

²² Let their own table before them become a snare; and when they are at peace, let it become a trap.²³ Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually.²⁴ Pour out your indignation upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them.²⁵ May their camp be a desolation; let no one dwell in their tents.²⁶ For they persecute him whom you have struck down, and they recount the pain of those you have wounded.²⁷ Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you.²⁸ Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

²⁹ But I am afflicted and in pain; let your salvation, O God, set me on high!³⁰ I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving.³¹ This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs.³² When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive.³³ For the LORD hears the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners.³⁴ Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them.³⁵ For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah, and people shall dwell there and possess it;³⁶ the offspring of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it. (Psalm 69:1-36)

1) Historically it is about David (the king) or at least a true Israelite (king), a righteous one opposed by enemies. Therefore, it ultimately speaks of Christ, the seed of Abraham, the Isaac, the true Israel (Jacob). Regarding our Lord:

Waters up to His neck
Hated without a cause
Opposed by lies
A stranger to His brothers, His mother's sons
Zealous for the house of God
Heart broken by reproaches
Given sour wine to quench His thirst
Filled with thanksgiving, He sings

2) His wrongdoing not hidden from God (v. 5): how can this anticipate the coming true Israelite? For the messianic king: by ownership of our sins as His own

3) Judgment on the enemies of the true Israel is anticipated by imprecation, 22-28.
The tables will be turned in judgment resulting in desolation where they dwell.

4) There is unmistakable fulfillment of the anticipated judgment of our Lord's enemies in the case of Judas: tables are turned, the money he received to betray Jesus unto death was used by the priests to buy the field that became a desolate field of blood (and a graveyard) because it is where Judas hung himself. His end was in many ways a dark, guilt ridden desolation. The dwelling of Judas, the place bought with his money, is where he dwelt in gory desolation by suicide.

Therefore, Judas had to die in a table turning judgment, as Ps 69 anticipates: **May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it.** His dwelling place became his desolation; no one dwelled there except strangers who were buried in this field of blood.

Psalm 109

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. Be not silent, O God of my praise! ² For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues. ³ They encircle me with words of hate, and attack me without cause. ⁴ In return for my love they accuse me, but I give myself to prayer. ⁵ So they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love. ⁶ Appoint a wicked man against him; let an accuser stand at his right hand. ⁷ When he is tried, let him come forth guilty; let his prayer be counted as sin! ⁸ May his days be few; may another take his office! ⁹ May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow! (Psalm 109:1-9)

The true Israelite receives hatred for love without cause; lies for love, truth, and goodness

1) Imprecation for the wicked and deceitful: if he holds some special office, then let another take it.

2) One who holds a special office with Jesus (the coming Messiah, the coming true Israelite) and who returns love with deceit is Judas.

Therefore, it is necessary that a replacement for Judas be found, as Ps 109 anticipates: **Let another take his office.**