

02b ACTS

Let's resume our study now in Acts chapter 1. This next section, beginning in verse 15, is quite an interesting little section. And it will probably be a surprise to some. I don't know, I think it's been a long time since we've even visited this by way of sidetracking from another passage.

But we've seen the first 14 verses. The disciples have taken 40 days of instruction from the Lord Jesus. He has departed.

They have returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. If you can think back a few weeks to our study of the location, the Mount of Olives, and all of the different things that took place at that site, and you remember the significance of that mountain. When you think Mount of Olives, think decision.

Think turning point. Remember the imagery of those two mountains, and the valley between, and armies go forth to all of the earth from there. The Mount of Olives, the glory of God departs across it.

The glory of God returns across it. The glory of David departed across that hill. He returns across that hill.

The Lord Jesus departed across that hill, stayed on that hill, spent his night in the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of that hill, gazed into the city innumerable times during his ministry from that hill, and departed from that hill, and will return again to that hill. The place there is quite significant. If you want a record of the return there, you can look at Revelation chapter 1 and verse 7. Behold, he is coming with clouds.

Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. Now notice, when Jesus returns with the clouds, those who pierced him will see him. What does that tell you? There is a resurrection of Old Testament saints when the Lord Jesus returns, and the people who pierced him were Old Testament saints.

They were saved. They were believers in God. They were very much astray, but the Bible tells us the ones who see him when he returns are those who pierced him.

All the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. So it is to be. And of course, these are all the conglomeration of nations who are about to pounce on what they think is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow in Israel.

They're going to get the oil. They're going to get the minerals. They're going to wipe out the Jews once and for all.

And they've assembled the battle of Armageddon there. And when the Lord returns, he is going to wipe them all out and they will mourn. And many of the tribes of the earth will

mourn.

There's lots of different reasons for mourning. You can mourn because you are bereaved. We generally mourn over a loss.

Lots of different kinds of loss. Loss of life. Loss of property.

Loss of potential. Loss of relationship. Loss of loved ones.

Whatever it may be. But Revelation 1.7 tells us that. And the fact that Jesus would return to the Mount of Olives was known before Jesus ever came to earth.

Zechariah chapter 14 tells us about the return of Messiah. Zechariah 14. Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.

What do you suppose the rule will be for the division of the spoil? Everybody gets an equal share? You think that's how the spoil will be divided? That's not according to promise. We have need of faith. We have need of endurance.

But he's talking to Israel here. And their inheritance is divided on the same principle. A day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.

What has been taken from Israel? Their land? Their self-governing ability? Do you think the peace process and all of that that they're trying to work on over there is going to give Israel back their land? It will not. There will be ebb and flow and waxing and waning of various degrees of success and failure over there. But when they will truly take back possession of the land is when God gives it to them by inheritance.

By birthright. The spoil taken from you will be divided among you. Some of you will have a share.

Some of you will not. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle. And the city will be captured.

The houses plundered. The women ravished. And half the city exiled.

But the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then, this by the way is at the end of the 70th week of Daniel, tribulation. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.

In that day, verse 4, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. Which is in front of Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley.

So that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. You will flee by the valley of my mountains. For the valley of the mountains will

reach to Azel.

Yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come and all the saints, all the holy ones with him. Guess who the saints and holy ones are that come with him? That would be us.

We will return with him. In that day there will be no light. The luminaries will dwindle.

Remember in the closing days of the 70th week the sun has darkened and the moon has turned to blood. It will be a unique day which is known to the Lord. Neither day nor night.

But it will come about that at evening time there will be no light. And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem. Half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea.

It will be so in summer as well as in winter. This is what is going to happen as a result of the geological changes that take place when the Mount of Olives splits east to west. What is that going to do? That is going to open up a channel.

Half of it is going to move toward the north. Half of it is going to move toward the south. That is going to leave a valley in between.

The people are going to escape. And as a result of those movements along the geologists who have been surveying for oil and so on in the area have found a giant fault under the surface there in the earth's crust that runs right under the Mount of Olives. It was impossible to have known this in Zechariah's day.

But modern geology with their sonar and their satellite pictures and one thing and another they have identified there is a huge fault that runs east to west right through the Mount of Olives. So this was predicted way back in Zechariah's day that he would return to the same place that he left. That of course is what the two men in white... You wonder what happened to these men after they made their announcement Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into the heavens? You get the idea that they were all looking up and they heard these voices and they looked down and here were these men.

They didn't know where they came from. Are they angels? Are they passers-by who happen to get a word from God? Who are the men? Well, they would appear to be heavenly messengers because they are in white apparel. White apparel is a dead giveaway that you are from the heavenly realms.

Sort of the glow-in-the-dark clothing issue that they get up there would set you apart from your run-of-the-mill member of the citizenry there. Men of Galilee, this same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in like manner as you saw him going to heaven. And probably about the time they turned to ask a question, the men suddenly didn't seem to be there anymore, I would guess.

It doesn't say. Maybe they stuck around and answered questions or had a round table discussion, but I don't think so. I think they got dressed up, came down, delivered this one message.

Were these the same two that were at the tomb? Something we can find out later. If I had to speculate, I would say probably so. This is probably the angelic information squad for the resurrection and ascension.

The same two that met the ladies at the tomb, came and met the disciples on the mountain, gave the same sort of information. Why seek you living among the dead? Why are you standing here gazing into heaven? These are the men who get people's minds moving on. Let's keep going here.

Don't just stand there gawking into the heavens. Why are you sitting here looking around the tomb? Let's get on with it. So they're the get on with it team.

So then the disciples returned to Jerusalem from Olivet, near Jerusalem, Sabbath day journey. It emphasizes the Mount of Olives. We've done the same.

It names Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. It says one accord, but in Greek here the word is nous.

They all continued with one mind, if you will. They were of the same mind. They were homothumadon is the word that's used here.

Homo, you can figure out what that means. Homo means the same. Homogenized means all the stuff is mixed together and is the same.

Homothumadon has the idea of being unanimous. It's used quite often in acts. You find it in Acts 4.24, in Acts 7.57, in Acts 8.6. It always says the crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip.

Or the people cried out with a loud voice and covered their ears and rushed at him with one accord. Everybody is all together. And there is a decision that is made.

You either are everybody's together in rejection or everybody's together in acceptance. But they are acting as a group. They are acting in unison is the idea here.

In Acts 18.12, when Galio is proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat. So it is to be unified or unanimous in something. Well, this is the model for Christian fellowship.

It is to be of one accord, to be of the same mind, to be like-minded, to be in harmony, in union. What are they united in? They are united in proseuche, which is prayer, and in supplication, making requests. What's the difference in prayer and supplication?

Supplication is specifically requests.

Prayer includes all categories. Praise and so on. The women, Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers are there.

These brothers we know for sure include James who wrote the epistle of James and Jude who wrote the epistle of Jude. These men are going to be leaders in the Jerusalem church. They will not ever go very far from Jerusalem.

And initially they are going to have some trouble. We will see in the later sections of this book that James and his cohorts actually cause a lot of trouble in the first generation of the church. And notoriety in terms of being close to someone famous can sometimes do more harm than good.

It's going to take a while for James to get straightened out. Now look at verse 15. In those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples.

Altogether the number of names was about 120. So they have multiplied tenfold in this time. At least as far as those who are meeting with them.

You start out with the 12. And we know there have always been additional disciples in the looser circle of followers. But those who are continuing who believe in the resurrected Lord, who have probably seen the resurrected Lord.

We know at one time upwards of 500 people saw him. There's 120 meeting in Jerusalem. He stands up in the group and he says in verse 16.

Men and brethren, this scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas. Who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered with us and attained a part in this ministry.

What's he saying? Judas was a bona fide disciple. He partook of everything the other disciples partook of. He had a standing.

He had a place. He was not an unbeliever. He was not a pagan.

He was a purity grade A card carrying disciple. But he fouled up. He betrayed the Lord.

And so Peter decides something needs to be done about this. They are a man short now. They lost him through this unfaithfulness.

It says he was numbered with us and attained a part in this ministry. The word part here is kleron. K-L-E-R-O-N You might have thought it was meros like a division of the inheritance.

But that's a different thing. This is a kleros. K-L-E-R-O-S Was a marker.

It could be a stick or a rock or a pot shirt or a piece of broken pottery. Used to decide something. It was like casting a lot.

And it was used to decide something or to mark out something. Casting lots you would cast the kleros. And so it came to mean something that is assigned by lot.

Something that is designated or apportioned to you by the cast of the dice. Or the casting of the lots. And so he has a portion or share.

He had an allotment would be a good way of saying it. This is an allotment. But unlike meros that means some whole thing that is divided into pieces.

And you have one of those pieces. Like an inheritance is divided into a meros. Into parts.

But this means that there was some sort of decision making process like the casting of lots. And you were apportioned something. So he has a portion or a share.

You have for example in Acts chapter 26 and verse 18. To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light. And from the dominion of Satan to God.

That they may receive forgiveness of sins. And a portion a kleros among those who have been sanctified by faith in me. An allotment.

That is the goal. Acts chapter 8 and verse 21. You have no part or portion in this matter.

For your heart is not right before God. You have no say in this particular transaction. Well that is what Peter says Judas had.

But now he has lost it. So what does Peter decide? Well first of all he says this man purchased. Luke tells us this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity and falling headlong.

He burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. This I think would be a good verse. Just take that one verse and preach a whole sermon on splitting apart and your entrails gushing out.

You know have it on Mother's Day or something. And really make an occasion of it. Falling headlong he burst open.

You know what this means is he bought the field. He went out there. Hung himself.

And nobody would go near him. He was persona non grata in the worst way. And he hung there until he just literally fell apart.

All his entrails gushed out. It became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem. So that field is called in their own language Akel Dama.

Dama is the word for blood. D-A-M. Akel is the word for field.

Field of blood in Aramaic. Akel Dama. Now you are back to Peter quoting the Psalms.

Let his dwelling place be desolate and let no one live in it. And let another take his office. Well if you have any kind of a decent footnoted Bible there.

It tells you which Psalms these come from. The one that says let his dwelling place be desolate and let no one live in it. Is Psalm 69 25.

The second one that says let another take his office. Is from Psalm. I can't read my own.

Psalm 109. Verse 8. So we know what scriptures Peter has been reading in this interim period. Peter has been back reading these.

So let's go back and take a look and see what else. Anytime you have an Old Testament scripture cited in the new. It's usually shorthand for the whole passage.

And someone who quotes a little snippet would expect you to basically know the whole thing. So you go back to Psalm 69. Psalm 69 is a Psalm of distress.

A cry of anguish to God. And it is an imprecatory prayer. Imprecation means boo on you.

Imprecation means I want God to cloud up and rain all over you. As my father used to tell me when I was a young lad. I'm going to climb up on your roof and tear off shingles so you can see daylight with your eyes closed.

That's imprecation. That means bad things are coming to you. So David is being afflicted by enemies.

And he says, save me O God. The waters have threatened my life. I have sunk in deep mire and there is no foothold.

I have come into deep waters and a flood overflows me. I am weary with my crying. My throat is parched.

My eyes fail while I wait for my God. Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head. Those who would destroy me are powerful.

Being wrongfully my enemies. What I did not steal, I then have to restore. I'm doing restitution for stuff I didn't even take or break.

O God, it is you who knows my folly. My wrongs are not hidden from you. May those who wait for you not be ashamed through me, O Lord God of hosts.

May those who seek you not be dishonored through me, O God of Israel. Because for your sake I have borne reproach. Dishonor has covered my face.

I have become estranged from my brothers and an alien to my mother's sons. Zeal for your house has consumed me. And the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

Obviously, we're getting into some Christology here. You think about Jesus going in. The zeal of your house has consumed me.

Driving out the money changers. I wept in my soul with fasting. It became my reproach.

When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword. Those who sit in the gate talk about me. I am the song of the drunkards.

As for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord, at an acceptable time. O God, in the greatness of your loving kindness, answer me with your saving truth. Deliver me from the mire.

Do not let me sink. May I be delivered from my foes and from the deep waters. May the flood of water not overflow me.

Nor the deep swallow me up. Nor the pit shut its mouth on me. The pit, of course, speaks of the grave.

Answer me, O Lord. Your loving kindness is good according to the greatness of your compassion. Turn to me.

Do not hide your face from your servant. For I am in distress. Answer me quickly.

O draw near to my soul and redeem it. Ransom me because of my enemies. You know my reproach and my shame and my dishonor.

All my adversaries are before you. This is a wonderful psalm to restore our objectivity when we are being afflicted and abused by people. This is the attitude that sustained the Lord Jesus.

Reproach has broken my heart, and I am so sick. I looked for sympathy, but there was none. For comforters, I found none.

They also gave me gall for my food. And for my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink. This is actually fulfilled at the cross.

May their table before them become a snare. And when they are in peace, may it become a trap. May their eyes grow dim so that they cannot see.

And make their loins shake continually. Pour out your indignation on them, and may your burning anger overtake them. May their camp be desolate.

May none dwell in their tents. For they have persecuted him whom you yourself have smitten. And they tell of the pain of those whom you have wounded.

Add iniquity to their iniquity, and may they not come into your righteousness. Now let me ask you something. Knowing that this is looking at the situation of Jesus Christ prophetically.

You don't want to lose sight of the fact that it speaks of David and his day. But in the prophetic aspect, it speaks of Christ. Who are they here? It's the Jews, especially the leadership of the Jews.

The Pharisees, the scribes, the elders, the Sanhedrin. Those who plotted to have Jesus arrested and executed. And those who continued to defame him after his crucifixion.

Who wanted to ensure that the story not spread of the body disappearing. And of his apparent resurrection in their mind. He says, these are ones who persecute the one that God has smitten.

It doesn't say persecute the one who God will smite. It's the one he has smitten. So these are people acting after the smiting.

Right? They tell of the pain of those whom you have wounded. They talk about, well, we crucified that rascal. We got rid of him.

Running around saying he raised the dead, that he healed the sick. He sure didn't heal himself, did he? Mocking, ridiculing, talking about the pain after the fact. Now, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Does this include Judas? Is Judas guilty of any of these things? He's not. Judas did a wrong thing. But there's lots of wrong things you can do.

This psalm and this imprecation does not apply to Judas. Maybe you can find another imprecation somewhere, but not this one. This one is specifically to those... Did Judas persecute the Lord Jesus? Talk about the Lord Jesus and his sufferings? Did he do any of the things in here? Reproach, shame, and dishonor? Act as an adversary? He led the people who wanted to arrest Jesus to his location.

He betrayed him with a kiss. But this is not a description of Judas' crime. Not to belittle Judas' crime, but this ain't it.

This is something else. These are the people who hounded Jesus for years, who eventually got him arrested and crucified. That's who this applies to.

And we want to be careful to not blur distinctions and apply scriptures that don't apply. It's just as important for us to understand the difference between us and apostles as it is to understand the difference between Peter, who denied the Lord, and Judas, who betrayed the Lord, and the Pharisees and scribes and elders who persecuted the Lord. Each situation is different.

And there are different scriptures that apply. There may be different policies, different principles that apply in dealing with each of those. And we want to rightly divide the word of truth line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept.

This passage is imprecatory. And if you want to be mad at somebody, you can get this Psalm and say, oh boy, I'd love to beat him over the head with this, persecuting me and talking bad about me. But it doesn't apply to Judas.

And what's the problem here? Look down at verse 28. May they be blotted out of the book of life and may they not be recorded with the righteous. Blotted out of the book of the living means may they die the sin of the death.

Take away, don't let them have any future opportunities here in this life. He's not saying take away their eternal salvation. The book of the living, these are the ones, the roster of those who are in the game, who are not benched.

They're still trying to redeem the time or whatever. So, this Psalm does not apply to Judas. And yet that's what Peter is doing.

When he says let his dwelling place be desolate and let no one live in it, he's applying this Psalm to Judas. And it doesn't apply. Not the right punishment for the crime here.

Then he quotes Psalm 109 in verse 8. Let's go take a look at that Psalm. Psalm 109, O God of my praise, do not be silent. They have opened the wicked and deceitful mouth against me.

They have spoken against me with a lying tongue. Did Judas tell any lies about Jesus? There's not a one recorded in scripture. In fact, he told the truth too well.

Oh, you want to know where Jesus is? I'll tell you the truth. He's over at Gethsemane. He's in the cave.

They have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They have surrounded me with words of hatred. They have fought against me without cause.

In return for my love, they act as my accusers. Judas is guilty of none of these things. He's a guilty man, don't get me wrong.

But not of this. In return for my love, they act as my accusers. I am in prayer.

They have repaid me evil for good and hatred for my love. What is the penalty for this particular treatment of the man of God? Appoint a wicked man over him. Let an accuser stand at his right hand.

When he is judged, let him come forth guilty. Let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few.

Let another take his office. This is what Peter quotes for Judas. Well, it's not a right application of Scripture.

Why does this make a difference? Let's go back to Acts chapter 1. Peter decides to take some action. He looks around and he says, We're a man short. Judas is gone.

Peter says, When I read my Bible, I see that another should take Judas' office. And he's been demoted from his dwelling place with the apostles. God has fulfilled the first Psalm here and has made his dwelling place desolate so that he doesn't live in it anymore.

He's left our assembly and somebody else should take his office. So Peter has taken these two passages from the Psalms that he's been reading because he's mad at Judas. He's got this imprecatory frame of mind.

So he says, Where are those good old Psalms that wreak havoc on the enemies? He's gotten these and he pieces these two things together and says, This is Judas. His house is desolate and his office needs to be assigned to another, so let's do it. So he says in verse 21, Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when he was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.

This smacks of the truth, doesn't it? Jesus said, You have been with me from the beginning. You have been witnesses of these things and you're going to be my witnesses. And so Peter says, Well, we need to replace Judas with somebody who's been here the whole time.

We need an old timer. What's the problem? What is the pattern of the calling of an apostle? Did the first four apostles take a vote as to who was going to be the next date? They didn't. The Lord Jesus called every single one of them.

Levi, follow me. Peter, follow me. John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thaddeus.

Simon, follow me. Simon, Peter here says, Let's throw the dice and elect an apostle. Let's elect the twelfth apostle and we'll get God to help us.

God has been giving them plenty of guidance. The Lord Jesus was with them forty days. Jesus never said, Oh, by the way, you need to find another apostle.

Jesus was there forty days. He never said, Hey, one of you men here, why don't you fill in for Judas? Jesus could have easily done this. Forty days he was there, appearing to them, giving them infallible proofs.

But Peter, on his own, has this bright idea. Let's fill the gap. Misapplying scripture.

So, they had two nominees. They nominated Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justice. This is kind of funny, because Barsabbas is basically Barabbas.

We got Barabbas out of prison, now let's make him an apostle. It's a different man, of course, but Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justice, so he has a nickname, and Matthias. So, this is the thing that happens.

Out of the entire pool of people, first of all, the idea was proposed, and it did not come from God to fill the gap. So, now they've had two nominees, and now they're going to go to God. After deciding to elect an apostle, after appointing two nominees, now they're going to go to God and say, God, tell us which one of these is going to be the next apostle.

Do you see the flaw in this approach? If you give God two choices... Now, remember how lots worked in ancient Israel? I showed you a little model of the lots. I took two pieces of cardboard and put white paper on both sides, and I drew an aleph on one side and a tau on the other, which is basically A and Z in the Hebrew alphabet, right? So, when you have these two lots, you have three possible outcomes. There's actually four, but two of them are identical.

You either get two alephs, which is like two heads, or you get two taus, which is two tails, or you get a head and a tail, which is no answer. So, what did they do? They nominated two men, Barabbas and Matthias, and they said, OK, heads, it's Barabbas, justice. Tails, it's Matthias.

And they kept pulling the lots until they got two tails, and it was Matthias. The first time they came up with a... as long as they kept indeterminate, they just kept casting until they got two to match. And as soon as it matched, the guy that it pointed to, he's the man.

So, they prayed. Verse 24. Now, this all sounds good.

Peter has quoted Scripture, and he has prayed. So, how could this possibly go wrong? This... Is there a more powerful illustration that you could make of what happens in the church today? Do people go to the Scriptures in their pulpits and in their Sunday school classes? Do they pray and raise holy hands toward heaven all the time? Do we do this ourselves? And yet, have we somehow presupposed an answer from God? Have we predetermined? Have we boxed God in and said, well, Lord, am I going to buy the Chevy or am I going to buy the Ford? And we haven't even answered the question, should I be buying this vehicle at all? And is God... you know, is this good stewardship? We narrow... and then we want God to say, well, which of these is best? Of these two, I'm going to do one or the other. You just tell me which one's best.

That's what the disciples have done here. And it is instructive to follow the logic. Peter is in the Scripture and he does not rightly discern its application.

He misapplies Scripture to a situation for which it was not designed. He says, look, here's

the Lord, look at the vinegar and the one who ate bread with me has lifted up his heel against me and all this. This is talking about Jesus.

And look down here, it says, a man shall lose his office and his house shall be desolate. Why, that's Judas. So, he's desolate and let his office be given to another.

We need to appoint another apostle. And he draws this conclusion and it's not warranted. The Holy Spirit is not in it.

The Lord Jesus didn't instruct it. But that's the conclusion he draws. Now, Peter is sort of a natural leader, isn't he? He always has been.

He's the one to speak. He's the one to jump in the water. He's the one to ask the questions.

Right? And he's in this assembly of 120 people and he says, well, who better than me to stand up and take charge? He's a take charge kind of guy. And it's not the time and it's not the policy. It's not the procedure.

If we think about this and meditate on it, we find areas in our life where we take the bit in our teeth. Do we even know what that means anymore? We talk about taking the bit in our teeth, but nobody rides horses for transportation like they used to. But a hundred years ago when horses were a regular thing, the bit, if you've ever worked with horses or bridles, the bit, the metal piece that goes across, is behind the horse's teeth and it's got a little lump in it.

And when you pull on the reins and that thing rotates, that lump makes an uncomfortable pressure in the horse's mouth. And he will respond. He will turn his head and then his body in the direction you are pulling or he will stop when you say, whoa, and pull back on the reins because he wants to get that pressure out of his mouth.

However, if you don't get the bridle on correctly or if he manages to shake it loose and get that bit out from behind his teeth and in his teeth, you can pull on it all you want and it doesn't make the pressure and doesn't make the discomfort. And when he's got the bit in his teeth, he'll do whatever he wants because you can no longer exert leverage on him. You can't convey to him your wishes by means of discomfort.

He's got the bit in his teeth. So taking the bit in the teeth has come to mean you go your own way and you disregard the guidance of those who are supposed to be guiding you. So this is what Peter does and it is a mistake.

It is wrong. It is not the right application of Scripture. It is not the right thing to do.

So they pray and they say, You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show us which of these two you have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas

by transgression fell that he might go to his own place. And they cast their lots and the lot fell on Matthias and he was numbered with the eleven apostles and he was never heard of again. That is the gospel truth.

This is the last time anybody ever heard a peep about Matthias. There is no recorded word. It didn't say Matthias said, Yea, Lord, thank you.

Nothing. It was a complete, like Monty Python's complete waste of time. It accomplished nothing.

Who is going to be the twelfth apostle? Who is going to be called by the Lord Jesus Christ and trained face to face in person? The Apostle Paul. Count up the number of books written by the Apostle Paul. Count up the number of books written by Matthias.

And you can see that this was big mistake number one for Peter, the first pope. If the Catholics want to claim Peter as the first pope, well, he didn't get off to a real swing and start. What is the point? Everything was going great.

They are praying. They are in fellowship. They are of one mind.

They are of one mind when they elect Matthias. But their one mind is wrong. And we have got to be so careful to rightly divide the word of truth.

It is the spirit of God and the word of God that enables us and empowers us to do God's will. When we step outside that and get our own ideas, at best, it is something that will be fruitless and not prosper. At worst, we can cause damage to ourselves and others.

So, what do we do to address this problem? Where was the failure? Did Peter not read the Scriptures? No, he read them. He was in the Psalms. Did he not understand what it meant? No, he understood what the Scripture meant.

The failure was in meditation and application. In thinking about the Scripture and saying, does this really apply to my situation? That is point number one. The second point is, a lot of times we think we are at a decision point when we are not.

We think something needs to be done and maybe it does not. We think that it is time to, like when in the course of human events, it becomes necessary to stand up and do something. Our fathers, the Declaration of Independence and so on, felt it was time to stand up and do something, and it was.

But it is not always that time. Sometimes the best thing to do is do nothing. God will mark the time to go.

When the Israelites were backed up against the Red Sea, and here comes Pharaoh and his chariots and his armies, or at least the chariots of Pharaoh. We do not know if Pharaoh was there or not. He certainly did not appear to get drowned.

But the Israelites could have panicked and said, we have got to do something. Let's swim for it. Let's quickly build rafts.

Let's kill the livestock and inflate their bodies and float across. Let's flee down the river bank. Let's run through the mud.

Let's send a sacrificial contingent out to fight a holding action, and you guys sacrifice and die in place while the rest of us run away. The best thing to do is stand in place and wait for the deliverance of God. Wait for the man of God to stretch the rod.

Wait for God to make a way through the sea and do not panic. Do not be prematurely active in trying to accomplish deliverance or in trying to solve a problem. When God gives us an answer, when God gives us a path, it will be clearly marked.

You will see it and you will say, well, that is from God. It will comport with Scripture. It will be identifiable as we meditate and rightly divide the word of truth, rightly apply the word of truth.

It will have all of the earmarks. It will have the fingerprints of God on it, and there will be no doubt. Did the Israelites have to ask themselves, hmm, I wonder if we are supposed to go across the Red Sea here.

Hmm, I wonder if we should maybe stay and try diplomacy with the Egyptians or agree to return and maybe they will not kill us. When God makes a way, it is just incredibly clear. If Peter had just kept on praying and kept on studying the Scriptures, he would have been fine.

But he makes this egregious mistake right at the outset. And poor Matthias is embarrassingly humiliated for all time because he is in here being elected and he is not an apostle. It was a faulty process.

But this can happen in our lives. We can do this faulty process that is just fruitless. So take a lesson.

We learn a lot of things from the apostle Peter. And this is really the last time that he really makes a major malfunction until the one that Paul mentions where he does not eat with the Gentiles. We talked about that on the break.

He is eating with them and then the men from James come and then he gets cold feet and quits. But Peter, his sacrificial act of love for us is letting his errors be immortalized in the pages of Scripture so that we can learn and not do likewise. So how can we learn from this? We need to analyze carefully our situation.

Maybe it is not time to act. If God is not prompting an action, if we are not at a crux where a decision has to be made, we might just stand fast. Well, this is a good place to

stop because we have come to the beginning of chapter 2 and the day of Pentecost coming.

And that is where we will pick up our study next time. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for giving us the record of events in the early days of the church as you have the rest of Scripture to educate us, to impart to us truth that enables us to live in a meaningful way, in a way that fulfills your plan and purpose.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit can impress these principles on our hearts. We pray that we will see the application of them and be able to live in a way that fulfills your plan and purpose for us. We pray that you will be with us as we go into the weekend and into the days ahead.

We pray that we can grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, not only academically but also experientially. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.