



IS GOD SOVEREIGN OR ARE HUMANS RESPONSIBLE? YES. – ACTS 1:15-26

GETTING STARTED

Before the church officially starts in Acts 2, there is one more thing that has to get sorted out, what to do with Judas? Judas betrayed Jesus, left the disciples and hung himself. And now the disciples had to figure out what to do next, and who should take his place? But they also had to wrestle with a bigger question, why did Judas betray them? Was it because he made a bad choice or was it part of God's original plan? The answer we are given is yes to both. But how do those two things work together and how should that reality inform how we make decisions? Should we as Christians cast lots to determine God's will for our lives? We see that God is absolutely sovereign over everything and we are still responsible for our actions, both good and bad.

READ THE TEXT: ACTS 1:15-26

¹⁵In 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. ¹⁷For 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. ¹⁹And



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.’

²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” ²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

1. Read the account of Judas in Matthew 27:3-10. How does it differ from the account in Acts? Do they contradict or do they work together? How would you put these stories together?
2. What does verse 16 tell us about the nature and origin of Scripture? Consider also 2 Peter 1:20-21.
3. How do the disciples select Matthias? This is the last time “casting lots” is used in the Bible, in light of what happens in Acts 2, why do you think that is?

APPLY THE TEXT

4. How does the Sovereignty of God and our responsibility work together in our decision making? How does that combat anxiety in our lives?
5. What encouragement is there in the fact that these 120 people changed the course of history going forward to us as we share the gospel?



SHARE & PRAY

1. As we study the book of Acts, think carefully about 1 or 2 people that you would like to actively share the gospel with. Share them with your life group and hold one another accountable in prayer and support.
2. In light of Acts 1:15-26, pray that God's will would be done in your life, that you would make wise and faith-filled decisions and not to be anxious about what is in God's control.

