

ACTS 1:12-26

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.¹³ When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)¹⁶ and said, "Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.¹⁷ He was one of our number and shared in our ministry."

¹⁸ (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

¹⁹ Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

²⁰ "For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms:

"May his place be deserted;

let there be no one to dwell in it,'

and,

"May another take his place of leadership.'"

²¹ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us,²² beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

²³ So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.²⁴ Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

When you were growing up, how did you and your friends choose teams for kickball, tag, or other such games?

Read verse 14 carefully. What were the two things they were doing? How is that relevant to us today?

In verses 18-22, what proposal did Peter make to the church? Why might some be surprised by Peter being the leader?

What is the prayer offered in verse 24? Why is prayer important in our decision-making process?

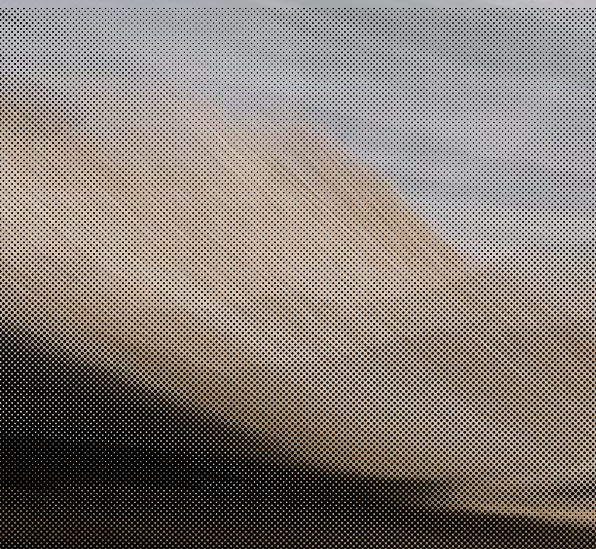
How did the Lord guide the selection of the 12th apostle? How does the Lord guide us today?

What can we learn about making big decisions from this passage? What has been your experience in making wise decisions in the home, workplace, relationships, etc.?

DAILY READINGS

1. PSALM 27:1-14
2. NEHEMIAH 1:1-2:8
3. LUKE 6:12-26
4. JOHN 15:1-17
5. ROMANS 12:1-21
6. 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13
7. ACTS 1:12-26

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ACTS 2

THE PROMISED HOLY SPIRIT

New Testament scholar Darrell Bock tells his students that Luke 3:16 should be as well known to us as John 3:16. Luke 3:16 says, “John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’” Why would Dr. Bock compare Jesus bringing the Holy Spirit to Jesus bringing eternal life? This question takes us to the heart of the salvation story and the significance of Pentecost in Acts 2.

The Hebrew prophets promised that the Spirit of God would accomplish this salvation. God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel in describing Israel's return from exile, saying, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God” (Ezekiel 36:26-28). Notice that the presence of God's Spirit will enable the people to finally obey God and dwell with Him. And again in Ezekiel 37:14a, “I will put my Spirit in you and you will live...”

The prophet Joel wrote, “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28-29). It is from this passage that Peter quotes to explain what was happening at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). The event was promised by the Old Testament prophets, by John the Baptist, and finally by Jesus Himself

in Luke 24:49, “I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

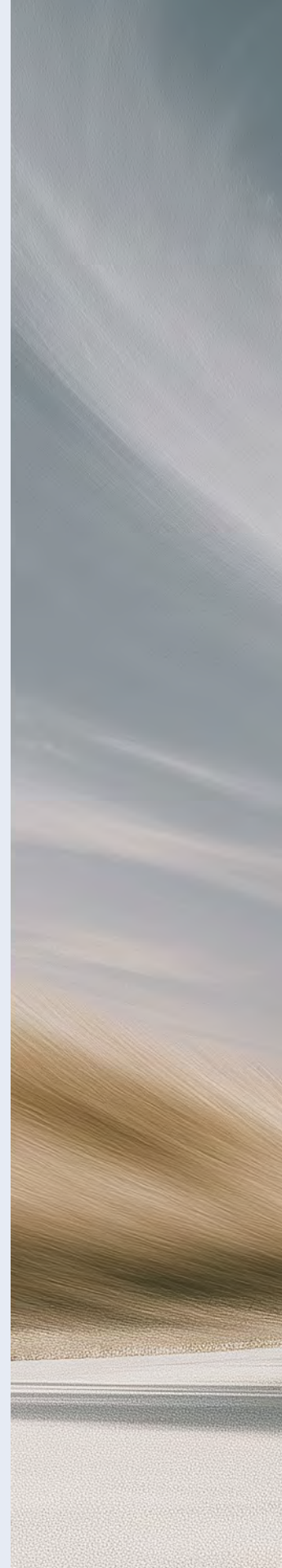
Theologian J. I. Packer said that the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives centers on the word “presence.” The Holy Spirit makes God present with each of us. He fulfills Jesus’ promise to “be with us always, to the very end of the age.” In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul wrote that the Spirit is “...a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory” (1:14). The Holy Spirit brings a glimpse today of what our eternity with God will be like.

Life with God is not just a future reality. For those with faith in Christ, life with God begins now. A life of encouragement, transformation, empowerment for ministry, new understanding, and love is available to believers today because the Holy Spirit is among us. This is the hope Israel clung to. The coming of the Spirit means that God dwells among His people as He will one day dwell in the New Jerusalem.

The Birth of the Church

The second chapter of Acts introduces us to the birth of the church. This birth is marked by four events. First, those who gathered were filled with the promised Holy Spirit. Second, the Holy Spirit miraculously enabled some to speak in “other tongues” (languages). As a result, this diverse group of believers, gathered from the Graeco Roman world, understood what was spoken in their own language. Third, Peter addressed the crowd providing clarity and context to the experience and issued a call for repentance. Fourth was the amazing response of 3,000 people being added to their number that day.

What the Old Testament prophets longed for—the indwelling of God’s Spirit—was realized with the believers gathered at Pentecost. Luke, a careful historian, records this moment not only as the continuation of God’s redemptive plan but also as the inauguration of a new reality: the Church empowered by the Spirit. This same Holy Spirit continues His work in believers today—convicting, guiding, equipping, and assuring us of the hope we have in Jesus. Just as the early church was born through the power of the Holy Spirit, so too are we invited to live Spirit-empowered lives that point others to Christ and to participate in the unfolding story of God’s redemption.



PASSAGE INSIGHT

THE PROMISED HOLY SPIRIT

ACTS 2

