

Episode #1110 Acts 1 Part 5-The Fall of Judas

I. Acts is unique in the New Testament. Rather than the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, it focuses on what came after, when the Lord had ascended back into heaven. The Lord left His disciples with many commands to carry out, and Acts tells us how they did them.

II. The Fall of Judas. Acts 1:15-20.

- A. Acts 1:15. Sometime during these ten days. Peter was acting by the will of God. Not just his words, but also his acts were inspired. Peter did this during a time of prayer. It is slanderous to say they did not seek the Lord's will before doing this. The number of disciples is about 120 (more or less). This is three forties, forty being the number of a probationary or waiting period, and three the number of divine appointment.
- B. Verse 16. This does not mean Judas had no choice but to betray the Lord. Peter is speaking after the fact. The Holy Spirit through David predicted that one would betray the Lord. He did not say who that person would be. Judas made his choice. Even if Judas was not guilty of betraying the Lord, he would still be guilty of being a thief, and lose his place in God's kingdom. John 12:6, compare I Corinthians 6:9-10. Mark 14:21. If Judas would end up saved eventually, then it would be better for him that he had been born. "The Holy Spirit" is "the Spirit the Holy" in Greek, and means the Person of the Holy Spirit, not just His power. The Spirit spoke by the mouth of David. Let us never follow Judas' path!
- C. Verse 17. The Lord had chosen Judas, and numbered him among the twelve. *Part* means lot. We speak of "casting your lot" in with something, meaning you dedicate yourself to it. The Greek used this word for having a portion in something.
- D. Verse 18. This was not the thirty pieces of silver that Judas received for betraying the Lord. He did not purchase anything with that money, but threw it into the holy place of the temple, Matthew 27:5-8. The priests took the money, and bought an unclean field to bury foreigners in. So what is this?
 1. John 12:6. Judas was the treasurer for the disciples. However, he was a thief, and was embezzling from the Lord! This money was the "wages of iniquity."
 2. Judas took this money and put it into a piece of land. He did not believe Jesus was the Messiah, and probably figured the group would break up eventually. Then, he decided to speed this along by his betrayal. When this didn't just lead to the Lord being jailed, but rather His crucifixion, Judas was conscience-stricken, and hanged himself in the field he thought would bring him happiness.
 3. What about this strange "falling headlong" and the disgusting record that "he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out"? Many ideas have been put forward. Some (like in the *Companion Bible*) seem somewhat ridiculous. Others, (like that of Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum in *Messianic Christology*) seem more plausible, yet ultimately do not match up to what is written. "Falling headlong" is a bad translation. Falling is the Greek *ginomai*, means to become, not to fall. Headlong is *prenes*, which occurs only here. In the article "The Case of Judas Iscariot" in *Word of Truth* Volume X number 3, Hershey Julian suggests:
 4. When Judas hung himself in the field he had secretly purchased, no one knew what had become of him. When he hung there for a long time, perhaps more

than a month, his body had started to decay. Finally, his chest cavity burst open, and the built-up gasses caused his entrails to be ejected out the hole. This was a fitting end for Judas, but he still faces the coming resurrection both of the just and the unjust, and facing the Lord in judgment. He will have plenty of time to wish he had never been born.

- E. Verse 19. Judas was eventually found. A place where parts of a dead body had been scattered would forever be unclean afterwards. This is the same name as was given the field purchased with Judas' blood money, yet it is not the same field. Any field associated with blood became unclean and taboo for any law-keeping Israelite. In Matthew 27:8, the high priests purchased a field with the money Judas threw back to them, *agros haimatos*. Here, Judas purchased a plot of land with the money he had embezzled from the Lord, which became known as "Bloody Estate," *chorion haimatos*. Since the *New King James* improperly translates this too as "The Field of Blood," some have mixed up the two. But they were two different purchases, with two different sources of money, and two different kinds of ground.

III. Conclusion: Peter announced to the rest of the disciples that a replacement for Judas had to be made. Judas betrayed the Lord by leading those who arrested Him. He was not just condemned for betraying the Lord: he also was a thief who stole from the money many honest-hearted people lovingly donated to the Lord. His actions and betrayal of his Lord were terrible. Let us learn from his sad example, and never betray our precious Lord as Judas did!