

REFLECTION GUIDE

ACTS 1:12-26 - READINESS FOR THE MISSION

KEY TERMS

The women - In addition to Jesus' twelve male disciples, Jesus also had several female disciples including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna (Luke 8:1-3), Mary and Martha (Luke 10:48-42), and likely others who are not explicitly named in the gospels.

Baptism of John - John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare his people for the coming of Jesus by calling on them to repent of their sins and be baptized (Luke 3:1-22). Despite his hesitations, John baptized Jesus as an inauguration to Jesus' earthly ministry.

Casting lots - Casting lots was a practice God's people used to determine his will in a specific situation; although casting lots might seem like superstition to us, God actually ordained the practice. However, after the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, Christians now have direct access to God's wisdom through the indwelling of the Spirit and the Bible doesn't record God's people using lots again.

DID YOU KNOW?

A *Sabbath day's journey* (v. 12) was 2,000 cubits (just over 1/2 mile), which was the maximum distance Jews would travel on the Sabbath.

Although this exact regulation isn't found in the Old Testament, it is based on the Sabbath principle of rest and leisure.

BACKGROUND

In Acts 1:1-11, Jesus told his followers to return to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit, who would come and empower them to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. Now in verses 12-26, Jesus' disciples obey Jesus by returning to Jerusalem and waiting for the coming of the Spirit. This time between Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Spirit was a little more than a week and during this time we see Jesus' followers praying together and choosing someone to replace Judas, who had betrayed Jesus to his enemies (Luke 22:3-6, 47-53). It's interesting that Luke records that Judas bought a field with his reward and burst open and died in the field (v. 18), but Matthew records that Judas returned the money, the chief priests bought the field, and that Judas hanged himself. There are two main options for reconciling these two accounts. The first is that Luke isn't recording what actually happened but what *became known to all the inhabitants Jerusalem* (v. 19), and the wrong story had become known. The second option is that Judas did return the money, but it was still used to purchase a field, and that Judas did hang himself, but then he fell from the tree and burst open into the field. This passage then ends with the disciples praying and casting lots, a practice instituted by God in the Old Testament, and ultimately choosing Matthias to replace Judas.

GOING DEEPER

In verse 20, Peter cites Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8 as support for replacing Judas with another disciple. Read Psalms 69 and 109 in their entirety. Who wrote these Psalms? What are they about? Why do you think Peter applies them to Judas?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read Acts 1:12-26 and make 5-7 observations on these verses. What stands out? What surprises you?
2. Look back at Acts 1:8-11. Why are the disciples told not to stand around looking up into the sky?
3. In verses 12-14, what specifically do you notice about how their spiritual community waited on God and prepared for its mission?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. What do these verses teach us about church relationships?

LIVING THE WORD

5. Do you view prayer as an active part of the mission? Why does prayer sometimes feel like a waste of time?
6. Share about one experience you've had where you were encouraged by the community of other Christians. How did that experience impact your ability to live on mission?
7. What is one growth area for you to ready yourself for God's mission?