

BACKGROUND:

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, His disciples tried to figure out what to do next. The first step was to replace Judas so they would once again number 12 apostles.

The discernment process involved the prayerful casting of lots, basically rolling dice to determine which of the two God called to take Judas' place.

SCRIPTURE:

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people) and said, 'Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus — for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.' (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. This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 'For it is written in the book of Psalms,

*"Let his homestead become desolate,
and let there be no one to live in it";*

and

"Let another take his position of overseer."

So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.' So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

- How do the people in the story hear God's call to them?
- How open are they to God's call?
- What might this passage say to our community of faith?