



1. First read Acts 1:9-26 twice. Try retelling the story in your own words as a group without looking at the passage. What does each one in the group remember? Help each other out!

2. How do you think the disciples felt having just heard Jesus tell them to be witnesses to the whole world (1:8), and then immediately seeing Him ascend into a cloud out of sight? (1:9,10)

3. What question and promise did the two men in white apparel give to the disciples? (1:11) How do you think the disciples felt after hearing their words? (Luke 24:52,53)

4. Why didn't the apostles immediately go spread themselves out to all the regions in obedience to Acts 1:8? (1:4,12) Why was this important?

5. What stands out to you about these believers in verses 12-14? How many characteristics can you find that describe them in these verses? How can you apply these characteristics to your own life?

6. Why do you think they dedicated themselves to continual corporate prayer (1:14)? Why do you think corporate prayer is important for a church's spiritual health and fulfilling Acts 1:8?

7. What importance did Peter give to the prophecies spoken by King David in verses 15-20? How was the prophecy in verse 20 applied and obeyed by the apostles?

8. What prerequisites were required for the one chosen to take Judas' place, and why (1:21-23)? What was unknown about the two men that caused the apostles to pray in verse 24?

9. How did the apostles show their dependence on God and not their own will, desire or emotions in the choice of a replacement for Judas (1:24-26)? Compare Proverbs 16:33.

Call to action:

How would you evaluate your personal and corporate prayer life on a scale of one to ten, and how could you do better? What can you do differently this week to align your life with the example of these early believers?



UNITED CORPORATE PRAYER - Obedience to the Ascended Lord's Marching Orders
Leader Notes for Acts 1:9-26

As you read through this passage together a couple of times and retell the story in your own words, first you will see Jesus "lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (1:9). The eyewitnesses to His ascension are comforted by the angels' words, "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same manner as you have watched Him go into heaven" (1:11). The promise of His return in the second advent of Christ has yet to be fulfilled. As we all await the fulfillment of His promise, may we be found obedient to His marching orders (1:8)!

In obedience to the Lord's orders, the disciples return to Jerusalem and stay there, awaiting "the Promise of the Father" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). They were all together in one accord and "continually devoting themselves to prayer" (1:14). In spite of their recent loss of the physical presence of their dear Lord, their devoted continual prayer and waiting in obedience would be rewarded. In John 16:7 before His parting, Jesus had said to them, "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." In 1:9-26, we see the secret to their being blessed with so much progress in the book of Acts. A movement of prayer and dependence on God, preceding open doors for the gospel, is a pattern clearly seen throughout the book of Acts.

"In those days" (1:15) refers to the days between the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost – ten days in all. These were days full of continual devotion to prayer. During this time, Peter stood up and brought to the attention of about 120 people, still gathered in expectation and prayer, two Old Testament verses. Peter says concerning Judas, "He was counted among us and received his share in this ministry" (1:17). This Judas, one of Satan's agents "who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus" (1:16), was now to be replaced. The "field of blood" known to all in Jerusalem as acquired by Judas "with the price of his wickedness" (1:18) must be left "desolate, and let no one dwell in it" for the fulfillment of Psalm 69:25. And "let another man take his office" must take place in obedience to Psalm 109:8.

In 1:21-26 we see the process for choosing a replacement for Judas. He was to be a disciple who had accompanied the others as eyewitnesses from the baptism of John until the ascension, to be a witness with them of His resurrection (1:22). Joseph (Barsabbas) and Matthias were brought forward. By looking to His Word, praying, and then casting lots, the disciples showed their dependence upon God for His choosing. Casting lots went way back, seen as a way of seeking God's choice even in the time of Jonah (Jonah 1:7). In Acts 1, they first prayed, "You, Lord, who knows the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen" (1:24), and then they cast lots. The disciples were able to put two men forward as having the requirements as eyewitnesses, but only God could see what was in their hearts. Waiting on God "in those days" with devotion to continued united corporate prayer was key to hearing from God and His choice in their decision making.

