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Acts 1:9 - 1:26



Acts - Steve Gregg

In "Acts 1:9 - 1:26," Steve Gregg explores the concepts of Jesus' ascension, second coming, and the replacement of Judas among the apostles. He notes that the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to spread the Gospel and that the Roman Catholic Church's view of Peter as the foundation of the Church is not based on Jesus' words. The book of Acts offers insight into the early church's mentality, which was later influenced by human traditions. The goal is to return to the practices of the apostles and the early church rather than relying on traditional beliefs.

Transcript

So, Jesus told the disciples, as we saw in the first eight verses of Acts 1, that they would be his witnesses to the ends of the earth, and this was in answer to their question about the kingdom being restored. And although he didn't say so, his answer to them was telling them not so much when, but how. They asked, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He didn't tell them anything about timing.

He told them about the method. The kingdom would come through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth through them. But, just as Jesus had never preached the sermon and never worked any public work before the Holy Spirit came upon him, he told them that the Holy Spirit will have to come upon you so you'll be empowered to be my witnesses.

And that's interesting to realize because they had been with him for a number of years being taught personally by him. You can't get a better seminary training than that. And yet, he did not assume that since they had been trained by the vest himself, that they were now trustworthy to be sent out on the mission.

They had to wait until they were filled with the Spirit, until the Spirit came upon them. Because the work of God can only be done by God, and God's Spirit is God, and as he fills his people and works through them, he is doing his work. We are his body, we're his hands and feet, and he's the one doing his own work.

And so, I don't think it's any different any time in church history. I mean, if they couldn't

do their ministry without being filled with the Spirit, I'm not sure that we should think that anyone could. I think that we should not just figure that if we have training or if we have knowledge that we'll be effective.

We do need to have whatever training and knowledge is required for a given task that God gives us. But to be effective for the Kingdom of God, we have to have the Spirit, so that the Spirit can do the work through us. Now, verse 9, Now, the ascension of Christ, I think, does not get as much attention in our general thought and preaching as his death and resurrection.

I mean, Jesus on the cross is the most common image, and the resurrection, the empty tomb, these are the things that we picture as Christ fulfilling his mission and dying for our sins and rising again. And that he ascended 40 days later is kind of like, I don't know, an appendix, something like, well, yeah, he's not here, so he must be gone. Oh, yeah, he went up, that's right, and he'll be back.

But the idea of him ascending is extremely important, and it's something that in the apostles' preaching, in the book of Acts, they made frequent reference to. We don't have them seeing what happened when he disappeared in the clouds. He ascended in death, but he disappeared in the clouds, and they saw him no more.

However, at the end of Mark's gospel, we are told what happened to Jesus once he ascended. In Mark chapter 16, and this is in, some of the modern Bibles do not include this, because it's not in some of the ancient manuscripts, but it's in, I think, probably the best manuscripts. In Mark chapter 16, and verse 20, it says, they went out and preached, well, I'm sorry, verse 19, so that after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

Now, it's interesting, how did Mark know that when Jesus disappeared in the clouds, that he sat down at the right hand of God? They knew that because it was prophesied in Psalm 110, verse 1. Psalm 110, verse 1, reads, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. That is the most quoted Old Testament verse in all the New Testament. You know that some verses in Isaiah and Psalms and so forth are frequently quoted in the New Testament.

No chapter of the Old Testament is quoted more frequently, or as frequently, in the New Testament as this one, Psalm 110. And it begins with these words, that God said to Jesus, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. Paul wrote a chapter in 1 Corinthians 15 about the resurrection and the ascension of Christ.

He said that Jesus is at the right hand of God reigning, he's the king, he's reigning from his throne in heaven over us. He is the king and we're his kingdom. But he ascended in order to be installed on the throne.

I can't go into this in detail because we're looking more at Acts than we are at some of the related cross-references, but one cross-reference that I would suggest you might consider is in Daniel, chapter 7. The only verse in the Old Testament where the Messiah is called the Son of Man. The term Son of Man is frequent in the Old Testament, but not with reference to Jesus. In the Old Testament, the term Son of Man usually just means the son of Adam, a human.

But there is one passage where the Messiah is referred to as one like the Son of Man, and that's in Daniel, chapter 7, verse 13. It says, Daniel says, I was watching in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him.

And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the nations, peoples, and languages should serve him, everlasting dominion, and so forth. Now, Daniel sees one like the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. We might think of this as a picture of the second coming, because we know Jesus is going to come in the clouds also, and we're going to look for him to come in the clouds.

But Daniel is not looking from the earthly vantage point, but from the heavenly vantage point. He's up in this vision, he's up where God is, and he sees Jesus coming up through the clouds to heaven. He comes to the Ancient of Days.

That is, he comes to God. He's ascending, not descending. And he's given a throne.

That's what happened. When Jesus ascended, he sat down at the right hand of God, and he's given a throne and dominion and a kingdom. When he rose from the dead, all authority, he said, in heaven or earth had been given to him.

But he wasn't actually installed on the throne until he ascended. That's his ascension, is his taking his seat and his crown and his throne and beginning to reign. And Daniel sees him coming up through the clouds.

Acts 1 tells us that the disciples saw him go up into the clouds. They saw him disappear into the clouds. Daniel's on the other side seeing him come through the clouds to God, where he sits down at the right hand of God and is given his royal position.

And that's what the early Christians understood, that when Jesus went to heaven, he sat down at the right hand of God, and he began to reign. In Revelation 3, verse, I think it's verse 21, Jesus said to him that overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I have overcome and have seated on my father's throne with him. And so Jesus is seated on the throne with his father at his right hand now and is reigning.

He's our King, he's our Lord. They were his followers. Now, when he disappeared into the heavens, there were two men suddenly who had not apparently been noticed before, were not there before, standing in white apparel.

I think we're to understand these were angels. We always speak of these two men as angels, and I think it's right for us to do so. It's common in the Bible for angels, when they appear, to be described as men, even though they're not really human men, they're angels from heaven.

For example, when you read about the empty tomb of Jesus, some of the gospels say that the women came and they saw two men there. Another says they saw two angels there. Well, the men are the angels.

Angels appear in human form sometimes in the Bible, and when they do, they are described as men. So when it says there were two men in white apparel, it's interesting that Luke doesn't commit himself to them being angels, but I think he's implying that they are. The fact that they're in white apparel, I mean, why talk about what they were wearing unless you're trying to say they were somewhat radiant and different than other men.

And these two men knew something the apostles didn't, which also suggests that they must have been angels because the apostles had learned everything that Jesus had taught anybody. And they also said, in the middle of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in life manner as you saw him go into heaven. So just as Jesus physically and visibly ascended into heaven and disappeared into clouds, so he's going to come back the same way.

He'll come back in clouds physically and visibly to earth. And that's what we still await, of course. Now, this may be the first time that the disciples realized there was going to be a second coming.

You know, when we read some of the things Jesus said in the Gospels, we can see the second coming in some of these statements that he makes. But I don't know if the disciples had a clear understanding that he was even going to go away, much less come a second time. He was there.

As far as they were concerned, okay, you're here. Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel? No, I mean, they weren't thinking of him going away. They were thinking his mission, now that he's risen from the dead, is able to proceed.

And of course it was, but they didn't know he's going to disappear again and go to heaven. So if they didn't know he's going to go back to heaven, they probably didn't know there was going to be a second coming. But now they did, because the angels announced it to them and say, Jesus is going to come again as you saw him go.

Then they returned to Jerusalem from Mount Olivet, or the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem. It's actually on the east side of Jerusalem, immediately positioned east of the city. And they went about a Sabbath day's journey into the city of Jerusalem.

A Sabbath day's journey is a Jewish tradition. There was no mention of a Sabbath day's journey in the Law of Moses. But the Law of Moses said on the Sabbath day you can't exert yourself, you can't work, you can't carry burdens and so forth.

So the rabbis had decided that if you're traveling on foot, which most people did, you shouldn't go more than a certain distance on the Sabbath, because that exerts too much energy, it's too much work. So they kind of made up the distance that they thought, you can go three quarters of a mile. Three quarters of a mile is a Sabbath day's journey.

Now of course, the Pharisees always found ways around the Law. They said, well you can go three quarters of a mile on the Sabbath from your home, and you can describe your home as any place where you have two days' worth of food. So if someone wanted to go on a longer journey on the Sabbath, they could get around their own system by, on the day before Sabbath they could stash two days' worth of food at a place three quarters of a mile from their home, and they'd go another three quarters of a mile and stash two days' worth of food, and do that all the way to wherever they wanted to be.

Then on the Sabbath they could make the whole journey. It's just kind of legalistic stuff. But a Sabbath day's journey was a familiar expression to the Jews.

And Luke said, well the distance from where Jesus ascended to Jerusalem where they went to the upper room and waited for the Holy Spirit to come was a Sabbath day's journey, which is a three quarters of a mile in distance. When they had entered, that is when they entered the house, they went up into the upper room where they were staying. Peter, James, John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

That's eleven. The reason there's not twelve is because one of them was now dead. Judas Iscariot, we know, had committed suicide.

It says, these all continued with one accord and prayer and supplication with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers. Now we're going to find there's actually 120 people there. It's not just the eleven that are named, but he's making it very clear that the whole group of apostles that were alive at that time were there and Mary the mother of Jesus was there and the brothers of Jesus and of course others as well.

This was the total remnant of faithful followers of Jesus in Jerusalem at that time. Now, Jesus preached in Galilee to large multitudes and had a lot of followers there at one time, but these people weren't all in Jerusalem apparently. In all likelihood, after Pentecost, the disciples went out to Galilee and kind of spread the word among those who had followed Jesus in Galilee, but there were only about 120 believers in Jesus in Judea, in Jerusalem, and that included these disciples and the family of Jesus.

It says, in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples. Altogether, the number of names was about 120 and he said, men and brethren, this scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry. Now this man, meaning Judas, purchased a field with the wages of iniquity and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out and it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem so that the field is called in their own language, Akodama, that is the field of blood.

For it is written in the book of Psalms, let his habitation be desolate and let no one live in it and let another take his office. Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when he was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection. And they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justice and Matthias, and they prayed, Matthias was the second man, the first was Joseph called Barsabbas who was called Justice, the second man was Matthias.

They prayed and said, You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two men you have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they cast their lots and the lot fell on Matthias and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. There are actually some controversies concerning this as to whether the disciples really did the right thing or not.

Some Christians think not, but we'll discuss that. First thing I'd point out is that Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples. He was always the most outspoken disciple, even when Jesus was on earth.

He was not the official leader by any appointment that we know from Jesus, though Roman Catholics believe Peter was appointed by Jesus to be the leader and they believe that the popes are successor to Peter and so forth. The idea that Peter was somehow given the leadership of the apostles by Jesus is simply not supported by the scriptures. It's true that on one occasion Jesus said to his disciples, who do you say I am? And Peter, the first to speak always, spoke and said, you're the Christ, the son of the living God.

He said, blessed are you, Peter, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And you are Peter, the rock. Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

That's in Matthew 16. The Roman Catholic Church holds the view that he's saying that Peter's going to be the one, like the foundation of the church. Like he stands out among the apostles as greater than any others.

The problem with that view is that he then says I'm going to give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven and

whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. But Jesus said the same thing to all the apostles two chapters later. In Matthew 18 he said to all the apostles that whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.

Which means that Peter, although he said it to Peter, he's speaking to him not as Peter per se, but as an apostle. The apostles all have this leadership role. Paul said in Ephesians chapter 2 that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. Now, in other words, the church isn't built on Peter personally. It's built on all the apostles.

Peter is one of the apostles and when he was speaking with Jesus, Jesus spoke to him as a representative of the aftershock group. He said upon this rock I'll build my church. He had chosen the apostles to be the founding stones of the foundation of his building, the church, which is made of living stones as Peter himself would later say.

In 1 Peter chapter 2, Peter talks about Jesus as the rock. He never speaks about himself being the rock. He says we're living stones built up into a spiritual house.

Jesus is the chief cornerstone. No one in the early church necessarily recognized Peter himself as the foundation of the church, even though he was the most boisterous and the first to speak. That was just his temperament.

That's not necessarily his assignment. Now, the Catholics also think that on another occasion, when Peter had denied Jesus three times and then after his resurrection, Jesus met with the disciples at the Sea of Galilee in Luke 21, that those three times he said to Peter, do you love me, Peter? And he said yes, and he said feed my sheep. By saying feed my sheep, he was giving Peter authority over the other apostles.

But that's a rather stretch in interpretation. Jesus' sheep is the whole church, and he's basically saying Peter, you denied me, you disqualified for office, but I'm going to reinstall you to be one of the shepherds of my sheep, like with the other leaders, with the other apostles. He's not saying you be the leader of the apostles.

He's simply saying I'm going to put you back from the position you fell from by denying me three times. You're now one of the apostles again, and you guys will feed my sheep. And it's interesting that Peter, again, in 1 Peter, when he's writing about the subject of feeding the sheep, in 1 Peter 5, he writes to the elders of the church.

He says shepherd the flock of God. In other words, you be the shepherds of the flock. You be the pastors.

You feed the sheep. And he says when the chief shepherds show up here, you'll receive

a crown, a reward for that. So he sees Jesus as the chief shepherd, not Peter, and all the elders in a role of feeding the sheep, being pastors of the sheep.

So Peter doesn't, in his own letter, indicate, both he talks about a rock in the building of the church, and he talks about feeding the sheep in his book, but he never indicates that he sees himself as having a particular role different than other church leaders in that, in either case. So I think that reading those things into Jesus' words to Peter, as has traditionally been done by the Roman Catholic Church, is totally without warrant, without basis. But Peter, nevertheless, did kind of speak up more than the others.

He was, I think he just took charge. He's a take-charge kind of guy. So he just stood up among the disciples and said, hey, I think we ought to appoint somebody to replace Judas.

Now some people think Peter shouldn't have done that. After all, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. And Jesus just told him to wait until the Holy Spirit comes.

He didn't tell them to do any business or to make any significant decisions. And therefore some people think that Peter was wrong to do this, and that Matthias, who was chosen in this way, should not be recognized as the replacement for Judas. Such people usually will say that Paul was God's intended replacement for Judas.

Paul, of course, didn't get saved until Acts chapter 9, but the apostles didn't anticipate Paul. They didn't know solitarsis was going to become an apostle. So some say God had Paul in mind to be Judas' replacement.

The apostles didn't know this, and they were not being led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had not yet been given. And they say they made a choice that was kind of jumping the gun, getting ahead of God on this.

And that Matthias was not God's choice to replace Judas, but Paul was. And now Peter, getting ahead of everything again, as he typically did, blew it. I don't think that that would be what the book of Acts is telling us.

I'll tell you why. Luke wrote the book of Acts, of course. Luke was Paul's closest companion.

Maybe Timothy and Luke. I mean, Paul had many companions in different parts of his travels, we read in Acts, but Luke and Timothy were the ones who stuck with him closest. And Luke was even with him to the end, at the end of the book of Acts.

Luke is with Paul when Paul's in prison, as the book closes. Paul was Luke's hero and mentor. And if Luke wrote this and thought, boy, these guys made a mistake.

They should have waited, because Paul was the guy. My friend Paul, he is the one that

God wanted to replace Judas. If that was Luke's opinion, he gives no indication of it here.

He doesn't say, oops, that was wrong, you had to do. In fact, all he says is that Matthias was numbered with the 11, from then on. He doesn't say, that was a mistake, he just indicates that the 12 included Matthias from that point on, forever.

Even after Paul was converted, and the other apostles knew about his conversion, his apostleship, they still didn't say, okay, Matthias, you're out, Paul's here. There's no reason in the Bible to believe that Paul, although he was an apostle, was supposed to be one of the 12 apostles. Jesus had spoken of the 12 as having some connection with the 12 tribes of Israel.

And in Galatians 2, Paul himself says that Peter, James, and John, and the 12, their ministry was seen to be to the circumcision. But Paul and Barnabas and his team were going to the uncircumcision. That is, Paul didn't see himself as one of the 12.

The 12 were connected to God's outreach to the circumcision, the 12 tribes of Israel. Paul's ministry had a different focus. Paul and Barnabas, Timothy, those guys, they were a team that was sent to the Gentiles, and not belonging to the 12.

And so, I believe that Luke is accepting this, that Matthias is in fact a legitimate replacement for Judas. And sometimes those who don't want to acknowledge this will say, but we never read of Matthias again in the book of Acts, which is Luke's way of saying, you know, God didn't accept him. But that's not exactly true.

We do read of him. But it says a number of times, the apostles did many signs and wonders. The apostles bore witness to the resurrection.

The apostles did this, the apostles did that. He's already told us Matthias is one of those. Most of the apostles are not mentioned by name after this chapter.

We've got 11 names given here. After this chapter, none of them are mentioned by name in the book of Acts, except Peter and James and John. The others are there, they're simply in the summary sentence, the apostles did this, the apostles did that.

So Matthias is mentioned, just not by name. And if him not being mentioned by name means he was an apostle, then we have to say the same thing about Thomas and Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. They aren't mentioned by name after this either.

So, I'm going to take it at face value that Luke, in telling this story, is accepting the outcome as the will of God. And that's, I mean, that's controversial because some people think he jumped the gun. Verse 15 says, altogether the number of names was about 120.

Now, why he mentioned that particular number may simply be because he was

interested in facts, figures, and statistics. Or there may have been another meaning, because under Jewish law, in order to establish a separate Jewish community anywhere, you had to have 120 members. Now, under the law, it had to be 120 men.

And of course, Luke's making it very clear that the 120 included men and women, the mother of Jesus and others. But Luke might be giving the number to say, this is the number there were. But interestingly, that's enough under Jewish law to form a separate Jewish community.

And they did. They formed the church in Jerusalem was a separate community from the unsaved Jewish community. I mean, they were kind of their own countercultural alternative society, living out their own standards under Christ, different from the rest of the Jews.

So maybe the number 120 is viewed as significant there. The fact that the Jewish law required 120 men might not faze Luke at all, since in Christ there's no male or female, bond or free, or Jew or Gentile. He might just say 120 people is as good as 120 men.

He may mean nothing by mentioning the number. But in mentioning it, he does give us information that would suggest perhaps this is a hint that the church is going to be an alternative community. Even under the law, it has the right quorum for that.

And therefore, it would have the ability to make decisions, like about their own leaders and so forth. And so Peter, with that kind of a quorum, Christians could be officially viewed as within his rights to suggest the appointment of a new leader to replace Judas. Peter begins to speak.

Now when he begins to speak, there's a parenthesis. He begins to speak in verse 16, but verses 18 through 19 are a parenthesis. And they probably do not belong to Peter's speech.

They probably are Luke putting an explanatory note in. Peter says, Now it's in parenthesis that we read of Judas' death. And the wording there makes it sound like it's not Peter speaking.

Especially when he says in verse 19, Well, that would also be Peter's own language. If I were to talk about the death, he would say, in our own language, it's called Akabah. It sounds like an explanatory note written by Luke.

We read in Matthew 27 that when Judas had betrayed Jesus to the Sanhedrin, he later had remorse about it. When he saw that Jesus was condemned, he tried to undo it. He wanted to take the money that he had been paid by Satan, send it back to them, give it back to them.

They said, we don't care about that. That's blood money. We don't want it.

And so he threw the money down on the temple floor and fled, and it says he went out and hanged himself. Now that's the end of Judas according to Matthew 27. Here we don't read of him hanging himself.

We don't read about any of that. In Matthew 27 it says that after he hanged himself, the chief priest took the money he'd thrown on the temple floor and went out and bought a field to bury strangers in, and they called it Akeldama, the field of blood. Now, interestingly, this little two-verse parenthesis, verses 18 and 19, gives entirely different information.

It says, first of all, that Judas purchased the field. But in Matthew 27 it says, after Judas died, the priest purchased the field in his name. This doesn't have to be a problem, because if something is done in your name, it's often said to be that you did it.

If someone takes your money and invests it in your name or something like that, it's not uncommon to say that you're the one who did it. For example, the Bible frequently says that the Jews crucified Jesus. Peter said that on his sermon in Acts chapter 2. Paul said it in 1 Thessalonians 3. He said the Jews crucified Jesus.

The Jews don't crucify people, they stone people. It was the Romans that crucified Jesus. The Jews didn't nail any nails in Jesus' hands.

So why do they say the Jews crucified him? Well, the Romans did it, but they did it on behalf of the Jews. The Jews pressured the Romans to do it. The Romans didn't want to do it.

Pilate wanted to let him go. That's the Roman governor. The Jews blackmailed Pilate.

They forced him, and it was their fault, because they're the ones who instigated it, and therefore it's common to say the Jews did it. But they did it through agents. In fact, in Peter's sermon in Acts chapter 2, he says to the Jews, you, through the hands of lawless men, crucified Jesus.

You crucified him, but it was through the hands of these lawless Gentiles. So, to say that something was done on behalf or at the request or by the instigation or with the money of somebody else, it's commonplace to say that the one whose money it was is the one who bought it. And, you know, my wife called me and said, on your way home, stop by and pick up some milk.

And so we stopped by the cube on our way back, and I say, Tim, could you go in there and here's some money, go buy some milk. And so he brings it back out, and I get home, my wife says, did you buy the milk? I say, yeah, I did. Well, actually Tim didn't.

He took my money and he bought it at my request, but he bought it. But it's not wrong to say, yeah, you asked me to buy milk, I did, I bought milk. You see, it's not hard to talk

that way, and it's not wrong to talk that way.

And so to say that this man purchased a field with the wages, well, we have more information in Matthew. It actually was done with his money by the chief priest. There's another thing here.

It says in verse 18, that falling headlong, he burst open in the middle, and all his entrails gushed up. Well, that certainly is a different description than Judas hanged himself. Much gorier, as a matter of fact.

And so some people think there's a contradiction here. But there's not. There's no, the only way that we could say there's a contradiction here is if both statements could not be true.

If two statements give different information, they don't contradict each other unless it's impossible for them both to be true. If they can both be true, there's no contradiction. Could a man hang himself and also fall down and have his bowels gushed out on the ground below? Well, maybe it's not very common, but it's certainly not impossible.

And I think we have to understand it that way. Judas did hang himself. At some point, his body fell to the ground.

Maybe the branch broke. Maybe someone cut him down and couldn't catch the body. Maybe he'd been hanging there in the sun for a while.

His body was all bloated. I mean, that's not unrealistic. And then when he fell down to the earth, his bloated body burst open.

Kind of gross, but that's what the Bible says. And it's not at all a contradiction. It's a supplement.

It's supplemental information. Matthew doesn't mention this information. He mentions he hanged himself.

This doesn't mention he hanged himself. It mentions the later situation. Now, the other thing where it differs is that Matthew 27 says it was called the field of blood.

I call it Bama because it was a field in which dead strangers would be buried. But this says it was called the field of blood because Judas' bowels gushed out there. So it kind of gives a different reason for calling it the field of blood.

Once again, it's not a contradiction. There can be two reasons for people calling it the field of blood. Both are good.

It's like I was talking this morning about Edom and Esau. Esau, when he was born, was covered with red hair. And they named him Harry.

Esau means Harry. Later on, he bought some, he sold his birthright at the cost of some red lentils. And the book of Genesis says, therefore, they called him Edom, red.

Now, he was called red because he sold his birthright for red stew. But my suspicion is he was also called red because he was covered with red hair. And by the way, there's many people who their friends call them red because of their red hair.

He was so covered with red hair, his brother could impersonate him to his blind father by putting goat skin on it, a goat's hair. And his father felt the hair and said, oh, that's Esau again. I mean, the guy was shaggy.

The guy was like an orangutan, an orange-haired man. I'm sure that they didn't just call him red because of the lentil stew he bought. There are more than one reason to call that man red.

And so also, if there's more than one thought that could go into the name or nickname for something, both could be reasons for people calling him that. In other words, this information is different than what Matthew gives. But none of the details are contradictory to what Matthew says.

They just cover more information than Matthew does. To suggest that Luke writing this was contradictory to what Matthew said would be absurd. Because Luke got his information from the other apostles on this.

And Matthew is one of them. It's not likely that Luke would hear from Matthew what happened to Judas or from the other apostles, and then decide to contradict him by writing this instead. It's obvious that Luke had more information than Matthew had recorded.

But not more information than he could get from talking to the apostles, which he did. We have reference to Luke being in Jerusalem on this occasion, but later on with the other apostles. I'm sure he was in fellowship with them.

Then Peter's speech resumes. For it is written in the book of Psalms. Now what he had said before that long parenthesis was that scripture had to be fulfilled about Judas.

Now we're going to read what scriptures he had in mind. What scriptures about Judas? He quotes Psalm 69, 25, which says, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no one live in it. And then he quotes Psalm 109, verse 8, which says, Let another take his office.

If you actually read these psalms, Judas is not mentioned in them. They are psalms where David is speaking generically about his enemies, people that betrayed him. David even says in Psalm 109 that, you know, for the love I gave him, he gave me, you know, he slandered me and betrayed me.

The first of these two psalms, Psalm 69, verse 25, which says, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no one live in it, actually has a messianic verse in it, just a few verses earlier. It says, They gave me vinegar to drink and galls for my thirst, which is, of course, a reference to Jesus on the cross. So that Peter understood these psalms, where David is talking about himself and his enemies, David is a type of Christ, and the betrayers of David are like Judas.

So he kind of takes the things that David says about those who betrayed him and applies them to Judas. And it's still a little confusing what he quotes, because the first thing he quotes is, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no one live in it. This is just part of a string of curses that David is uttering against his enemy who betrayed him.

And basically, if his habitation is desolate and no one's living in it, it means he's moved out. He's gone. He's probably dead.

Where he used to live is now vacant, is what's basically said there. So he's saying that this would apply to Judas. Judas had once been numbered with the apostles.

He left his position. His place is now empty. And then another psalm, which is Psalm 109.8, says, Let another take his office.

So Peter quotes these two psalms to make two points. One is Judas actually fulfilled prophecy by abandoning his position, and his desolation was vacant, no one living in it. And then the instructions of the other psalmic quotes are, You'd better replace him.

Let another take his office. Now that might seem like a stretch from those two verses to the action which Peter did, but none of the other apostles disagreed with him. There didn't appear to be any arguments about this.

And so he says in verse 21, Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when he was taken up from us, one of us must become a witness, one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection. Now there are 120 people there, and they could only find two who fit this particular qualification. Basically, the qualification was they had to have been there from the beginning, seen everything that they had seen.

Now this tells us, of the gospels, of Jesus and the apostles going and doing things, apparently there were others with them sometimes too, like these two guys. These guys were there with them from the beginning, and from the time of John's baptism until the ascension of Christ. After all, their function as apostles was to bear witness of these things, and a witness can't bear witness to what he hasn't seen.

So to qualify to bear witness with the other apostles, someone had to have been there and seen it. And you know, there's this idea of having been there from the beginning is

one of the things Jesus mentions as what qualified the apostles themselves. For example, in Luke 22, verses 28 through 30, Jesus says to his disciples, to the apostles in Luke 22, 28, that you are those who have continued with me in my trials, and I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as my father bestowed one upon me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now, he says they qualify for this because they had been with him in his trials, their presence with him through his whole life of trials, basically, his whole adult ministry of going through trials is what qualified him. Also, in John 15, 27, Jesus is in the upper room with the twelve, or actually, eleven, because Jesus had left. But in the last verse of John 15, it says that this happened, I'm sorry, excuse me, it says that you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning.

Notice, you've been with me from the beginning, you've seen everything, so you'll testify to that, you'll be my witnesses to this. And that's what Peter says, someone who's been with us from the beginning has to join us to bear witness of these things. So, actually, Peter developed this qualification for candidates based on what Jesus himself had said qualified them, the other eleven, for the position to bear witness.

So, essentially, Peter puts it on the 120 there to see if any among them fit that qualification. How many of those 120 have been there all the time since John has been with them and seen Jesus go up? Well, there are only two, apparently, they had. Or maybe there were more than two, but the others were clearly not worthy to be called apostles.

I mean, there might have been people who were kind of hanging around all that time, but they didn't have the character, they just weren't the ones. But they found two that both seemed like maybe equally possible. Now, what they did is they cast lots between them.

And I find it interesting, it says in verse 23, they proposed two, so these names were proposed by the people. But then when they prayed over them in verse 24, they prayed and said, you, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show us which of these two you have chosen. So, they're assuming that God has chosen one of these two, although both of the candidates were selected by the people.

They believed that God was, through them, choosing the candidates. And then through the casting of lots would reveal which of the two candidates was God's choice. Notice they refer to God, you, O Lord, verse 24, who know the hearts of all.

So, they're saying, you know, we don't know these people's hearts. We know they were with us from the beginning. We know that they have that basic qualification of being able to testify to what was seen.

But we don't know their hearts. We don't know which of these guys, if either, might, you know, blow it, like Judas did. Judas saw all this stuff, too, when he blew it.

You know men's hearts, so you can't. So, they kind of left the choice with God. And they cast lots.

And it fell on Matthias, and he was number 11. Now, casting lots, it's interesting that such an important decision as choosing an apostle would be done by the casting of lots. When Jonah was in the fish, remember, they cast lots.

I mean, before he was in the fish, he was in the ship. They cast lots to find out who it was that was responsible for the storm. And God showed them.

When the land of Israel was divided up among the 12 tribes, they did so by the casting of lots. Each tribe, by casting lots, they decided which plot would go to which tribe. So, apparently, it was a long-standing understanding that God would make his will known by the casting of lots, at least in some situations.

In Proverbs 16, 33, it says, the lot is cast into the lap, but it's every decision is from the Lord. That's Solomon saying that when you cast lots, the decision will be from the Lord. Now, I don't think that means that every time you roll dice and you play Nazi, you know, that the dice are going to come up the way God wants.

It's not suggesting that you can make all important decisions by throwing the dice or drawing straws or casting lots or whatever. But apparently, there are important decisions where the choice is basically between one and another. And they're both equally qualified, seemingly.

In other words, the people can't choose between them because they can't tell any difference between them. They both have equal qualifications. And therefore, casting of lots will single out one over the other.

Now, a person could say, God's working through the lot. That is to say, the casting of lots, God's controlling its outcome. And that sounds like maybe what Solomon was saying in Proverbs 16, 33.

Or one could argue that God doesn't care which one. They're both qualified. He's going to be the one casting lots.

He's going to just get you able to choose one and move on, you know, because it's a toss-up. It's a toss-up. They're equally good.

Now, you wouldn't want to... I know of some denominations. I don't know all denominations that do this. Because I know the Moravians, I think, used to and may still do, choose their elders or their churches by casting lots.

Which is an interesting thing. I guess they probably use this passage as a justification for that. I don't know very many denominations or churches that choose their leaders that way.

But an apostle was chosen that way, so there must be some validity in doing so. Well, there's not much more I want to say about this, and there's no reason we have to go later. Just to fill up the time.

I will say this about verse 25, when they're praying, they talk about Judas. He says, the replacement is going to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas, by transgression, fell. I want to just say this.

Judas fell from the apostleship. And therefore, there was a vacancy. Again, I don't mean to pick on Catholics, but this is an area where Roman Catholics see things differently than I think the Bible would suggest.

They believe in something called apostolic succession. And they believe that when the apostles died, they left behind successors, bishops of the churches where they had lived, who became their replacements. And when those bishops died, the next bishop in the same church was the replacement too.

So, you've got a succession of the apostolic office through the generations in the bishops. So, the Roman Catholics believe that the bishops of the true church are the bishops of the Catholic church, and that they are the successors of the apostles. They hold the position that the apostles held.

And, of course, they believe that the bishop of Rome was Peter. And therefore, any bishop of Rome, forever after, is the successor of Peter. That's the Catholic doctrine on this.

It's got no scriptural basis at all. The Bible does not teach apostolic succession. But sometimes, they will point to the replacement of Judas as an example.

Judas died, so they replaced him. So, there's a succession right there. Matthias became the successor to Judas.

But he didn't become the successor to Judas. He became the replacement for Judas. Judas fell from that position.

He didn't just die in office. He left office and needed to be replaced. He did not die in office and need to be succeeded.

And this is an important point. Later on in the book of Acts, in Acts chapter 12, another apostle dies. James.

The son of Zebedee. He dies at the hand of Herod in chapter 12 of Acts. They didn't

replace him.

Why? Because he died faithfully. He never left office. But Judas was seen as having abandoned his office.

His office needed to be filled because he, it says, from the apostleship from which Judas, by transgression, fell. He left the apostleship. He didn't just die.

He fell and left a gaping hole in the company of the Twelve. Now, in the book of Revelation, the New Jerusalem is seen to have 12 foundation stones. And on the stones are written the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

Now, that means they're kind of permanent. These guys, they died, but they don't leave office. When apostles died faithful, they were still apostles.

Now glorified. But the point is, James, who was an apostle, who died, wasn't replaced. Peter wasn't replaced.

There's nothing in the Bible that suggests that apostles who died faithful need to be succeeded by new apostles. There are bishops, of course, that did succeed them, but that doesn't mean they succeeded them with the same authority or the same office. They simply took over the leadership of the same geographical area, the same church, but the bishops didn't become apostles.

The apostles have been chosen by Jesus himself. That's what the word apostle means, one who is sent. And these men called themselves apostles of Jesus Christ, meaning those who were sent by Jesus Christ.

The bishops that were chosen by the apostles were not on the same level as the apostles themselves, even after the apostles died. So, the replacement of Judas does not set a precedent, as the Catholic Church has always taught, for succession of apostles, even to this day. So, there's a lot of things in the early church, in the book of Acts, that give us some insight into the mentality they had.

And we can see, in the way church progressed in later centuries, that human traditions were brought in that were not really part of the mentality of the early church at all. And unfortunately, we're born after those traditions have become established, and we can easily think of that as normal. You know, the traditional things that the church brought in that weren't in the Bible.

And that's what happened with the church in the Middle Ages, of course, the Roman Catholic Church. And then the reformers tried to go back to the biblical norms, but even they didn't go back as far as the practices of the apostles. They still had a lot of the same Catholic type, like infant baptism.

Infant baptism is not a biblical teaching, but the Protestants, the reformers, still practiced it, just like the Catholics did. So, getting back to the way the apostles did things, the way the early church did things, has been an elusive project for the church. But, you know, we just have to disabuse ourselves of a whole bunch of traditional garbage, frankly.

And going through the book of Acts is one way to help us do that. ♪