

THE ONCE AND FUTURE CHURCH

#2: Prepping for Pentecost

January 28-30, 2006

¹²Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. ¹³When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. ¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ¹⁶and said, "Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷He was one of our number and shared in our ministry." ¹⁸(With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰"For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms: "May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it," and, "May another take his place of leadership." ²¹Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." ²³So they proposed the names of two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." ²⁶Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles. *Acts 1:12-26 TNIV*

Introduction: Often, we find ourselves waiting as a church family for the Holy Spirit to move among us and God to make His will known clearly. So it was for the Christ-followers following Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension. Knowing what the fledgling New Testament

Church did in preparation for Pentecost helps us understand what we are to do in preparation for God's work among and through us.

- I. In the Right Place with the Right People (vv. 12-15)
 - A. The Apostles returned with the believers to the sacred places, probably the upper room where they had celebrated the Passover with Jesus.
 - B. In the same way, we gather with the believers in the place we have celebrated Christ's presence before.
 - C. Note that there were about 120 believers before Pentecost, when about 3,000 "were added to their number." (v. 15 and v. 2:41)
- II. Of the Right Mind in Prayer (vv. 16-20, v. 14)
 - A. Christ's followers were convicted that the Scriptures had been fulfilled in the events of Jesus' death and resurrection, including Judas' betrayal of Jesus.
 - B. We must be confident not only that God's plan has been revealed in Jesus, but that His plans are still being fulfilled in His church, even in tough times.
 - C. The believers "joined together constantly in prayer."
 - D. We must be in constant communication with God!
- III. Under the Right People Chosen By God (vv. 21-26)
 - A. Awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles organized to succeed.
 - B. It is up to us to organize the church for success according to Scriptural precedent.
 - C. A new leader was chosen from among those who had emerged from within the Body.
 - D. We must be all about developing leaders who emerge within the Body.
 - E. God's hand fell upon the right leader for the right time.
 - F. We must trust God to show us the leaders He has chosen to direct the work of His church.

Conclusion: Most of the church's work must be accomplished by God through His Spirit. When the time is right, the Pentecost still comes. Still, it is our job to be ready to respond when God calls and walk through the doors he clearly opens. He expects us to pray and organize.