

Qualifications for Office  
Acts 1:12-25  
May 29, 2022

If you were going to start out a book on the Acts of the Apostles, where would you start? First off you might want to start with the names of the Apostles. Luke does that. You notice his name isn't one of them. No, he is an outsider looking in, looking in to what these men did. Hence the acts of the Apostles.

Many knew them as the 12 Apostles. But there are only 11 names mentioned. The question that might come to mind is what happened to the 12th. Peter lets us in on the whole story of the 12th. He goes all the way back to David, who lived almost 1000 years earlier who in Psalm 41:9 wrote: Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

We think of what Judas did, denying Jesus, and yes, Peter denied Him too but we tend to look at Judas as some evil guy who stole from the money plate. Yet, how does Jesus through David describe Judas, "MY CLOSE FRIEND". My close friend. What made him a close friend? He was picked by Jesus to be one of 12, 12 men out of how many men in the area Jesus could have pulled from. He chose Judas and as David wrote, he was even more than just a friend, he was a CLOSE friend.

Spending all time with him, having him hold the money bag that was used to help the poor, and yes himself, but to help those out there, for one reason or another, who were having a hard time. Jesus said you will always have the poor with you but that didn't mean that someone wouldn't come along to help them to move forward.

11 Apostles when people were thinking 12. 12, the number Jesus picked. There must have been a reason Jesus picked that number. So what do they do? They go about picking a replacement. They pick a couple guys who had been with them from the beginning. Then they prayed and cast lots to see who it would be next Apostle, the guy with three names or the one with one. The lot fell on the one with one, maybe so we wouldn't get mixed up on who it was.

The 11 thought they had made the 12 complete. The Lord helped them in doing that but then some have wondered, maybe the Lord had another picked to fulfill that role. Jesus came to a man on the road that lead from Jerusalem to Damascus. His name was Saul also named Paul who was told to go to Damascus where he would be told what to do.

Jesus goes to Ananias who had heard about this Paul persecuting Christians, but was told that he was to go to Paul. Here is what He told Ananias: Acts 9:15-16 . . . "Go, for he is a

chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

Paul was Jesus’ chosen instrument. Chosen by Jesus, just as the 12 were. An unlikely pick we would think. Persecutor of those who called Jesus their Lord and Savior. A guy who held the coats of those who stoned Stephen to death. A Pharisee of the Pharisees who was so committed to the law that it surely would cause problems with delivering the Gospel, so much at odds it would seem from all those laws he was committed to. Yet, Jesus chose him.

He didn’t have a resumé with the best qualifications and yet the Lord was going to use him in mighty ways. He was going to be used to bring the light to the Gentiles and to God’s people Israel. He had qualifications that on the surface may have seemed like hinderances. Instead of qualifications, one might see him as a detriment to the growth of the kingdom of God. Why put this enemy of the movement in the midst of it? Kind of like putting the fox in the hen house.

Maybe once he understood it was not going to rise or fall on one man, Paul, then he too could look to the one man on whom it really fell and that was Jesus. Paul would go to the world, yes, challenged many times by beatings, stonings, hot and cold and hunger and another thing not mentioned but is common to all who want to bring Jesus to their world, rejection.

Yes, Paul felt the rejection of those who didn’t want Jesus to be their Savior. He felt the rejection physically and would die under that cloud. Yet, in that rejection there were those who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, were brought to faith in Jesus and His work for them and all people.

He was rejected because of Jesus but he wasn’t rejected by Jesus. Did you think of it that way for yourselves? What qualifications do you have to be able to enter the new heaven and earth to live with Jesus forever? What did Jesus see in you that He picked you? Was there something great in you, or was it more like the sermon we had awhile back where God seems to want to work through the small things, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians: 1:26-31 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being] might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

There is nothing for you to boast in. Oh, maybe if it was a shameful boast of the sins that you seem to want to commit. Maybe you could boast that you are worse than the next

person. Yes you have been tempted by various sins and have fallen hard, too many times to count. You would have to agree that you, too have broken all the Ten Commandments and deserve the punishment Jesus got for your sins. Yes, as Paul said, the good I want to do, I don't and the evil I don't want to do, I do.

Yes, Jesus has picked us in spite of not having the qualifications needed of this great responsibility placed in our hands. You might be thinking Jesus must have this wrong and yet each of you would say that you will be in heaven with Jesus when you die. How could that be? You have sinned and haven't stopped. You know better than to say that falsehood, you know better than to take His name and use it as if it really doesn't mean anything, you know better than to lie, cheat or steal and yet that little white lie that got you out of the bind was just that, a lie. Face it, your resumé isn't all that impressive and if judged based even on the world's standards, you would be left out.

Face it, there is nothing in you or me that He should have chosen us. The qualifications of sinning everyday just shouldn't have given us the opportunity to live for Him. No, we should be like those whom the Lord was going to destroy and just start over again with Moses. Moses pleaded with God that He shouldn't do it as it would not be a very good witness to those who didn't believe in the God of the Israelites.

They didn't have the qualifications so Moses stepped in so that God wouldn't be embarrassed. We don't have a Moses but a Jesus, the Messiah promised to Adam and Eve in the garden. He is the promised Messiah who came to make all things new, even sinners to saints.

His qualifications of the one who took on sin and won has now been put on each of your resumé's. Jesus is in that box that answers your qualifications to fill the job of Christian by virtue of your baptism into His family through the water and the Word. You have bestowed on you that name that is above every name in heaven, on earth and under the earth.

Adam and Eve, they couldn't even keep one law. Gideon, he was the least in his family that was the least of the tribes, David, the last of Jesse's sons was nothing but a shepherd boy, Ruth, not even of the Israelites was chosen to be the grandmother of the Savior. So many that the world would have rejected and yet the Lord chose them to do what needed to be done at the time.

No, you are not qualified based on yourselves but you are because of Jesus who lives in each of you by the power of the Holy Spirit. He will go with you, day by day as you go out into your world to do your job and to shine forth the gospel to this dark and seems to be, getting darker world.

This is a dark world where evil lurks, taking lives of this world and leading people down that path to the death that was meant to be life forever in the beginning. Death in the physical but who, more importantly are leading away people from Jesus their source of eternal life.

We look at the deaths of the Uvalde children and we are so sorrowful for those who now have to deal with the loss but what about all those who die daily, young and old where their deaths are not only physical but are dying with no hope for they are finding themselves separated from their only source of hope, Jesus, who went to the cross and paid the price for their souls.

We look at the loss of life as in West Texas and we wonder how could anyone do such a thing and we mourn for them. What really is a source of sorrow is if those who had their lives taken didn't know Jesus as their Savior. That is a real source of sorrow.

To have our lives taken from this earth means something greater for us who believe. We will get to be with Jesus forever and will get to live in the new heaven and earth.

We need to be like Lazarus who probably laughed in the faces of anyone who wanted to take his life. He knew what heaven was like. He knew that when He had finished this life, there was an even greater life to come.

That life is for you and for all people. Your Father in heaven wants you to be with Him as you look to Jesus the author and perfecter of your faith who for the joy that was set before Him, went to the cross for your sins, past, present and future. He has qualified you to receive eternal life.

In the mean time you are to live here on this earth and to bring the Good News of Jesus to all people. It is for all to share. Not to be kept with you or me. It is too Good, not to share.

This weekend we think of all those who gave their lives for the freedoms we have in this country. They died but we get to live in freedom, the freedom to let others know of Jesus who freed us from sin, death and the devil. Yes, we will all die but we are freed from death forever in hell for we will rise on the last day to never die but to live, live life forever with Jesus.

He has the same result for all who believe. It is a sure promise that all who believe and are baptized will be saved. They will be saved for a life forever with Him. You have been saved for a life forever with Him.

Paul pointed out the eleven and the choosing of the replacement based on the qualifications of being with the Apostles while Jesus still walked on the earth. Yet, he knew how he was chosen, not with that qualification but that Jesus would be with him even though he would have to go through many things in this life until his life was taken away to be with Jesus. We are to live our lives trusting in what Jesus places before us so that we use what He

has given us to point to Him who alone was qualified to die for our sins, rise from the grave and ascend to heaven to rule at the right hand of God. Qualified, no but He is.