

Shayla: Should casting lots remain a decision making process today?

Meforshim:

I think not. Apart from the one instance in Acts, there is not a single instance of casting lots in the early church. Two different arguments could be made against using the passage in Acts as an example. First, they had been told to go to Jerusalem and wait for the Spirit.

- **Acts 1:4-5 HCSB** While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. *"This," He said, "is what you heard from Me; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

Prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit, they went ahead and made this decision. I think that it is significant that Matthias is never mentioned and does not appear to have made any real significant impact as far as we can tell. The Apostles were certainly not above sinning or misunderstanding the Holy Spirit's direction.¹ It could be argued that the Apostles made a mistake.

Or, if you wanted, you could argue that the Apostles did NOT make a mistake and yet (because they are after all the Twelve), they were unique in their ability to make this decision. Perhaps that is why it is the only mention in the New Covenant.

We were given the Holy Spirit precisely to direct us, teach us and guide us. When the Messiah came, He came bearing gifts. The supreme gift was the gift of the Holy Spirit.² The role of the Holy Spirit is to remind us of what the Lord Jesus said, and to continuously testify as to the Lord God's will on any given matter.³ In fact, the Spirit will give us specific words and arguments to use during the great persecution that will mark the latter days.⁴

The prophet Ezekiel predicted this time saying:

- **Ezekiel 11:19-20 HCSB** And I will give them one heart and put a new spirit within them; I will remove their heart of stone from their bodies and give them a heart of flesh, (20) so they may follow My statutes, keep My ordinances, and practice them. Then they will be My people, and I will be their God.
- **Ezekiel 36:26-27 HCSB** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (27) I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances.

Jeremiah predicted that Yahweh would write His Law within us, on our very hearts. The result would be that we would no longer need reminding "Know the Lord".

- **Jeremiah 31:31-34 HCSB** "Look, the days are coming"--*this is the LORD's declaration--*"when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. (32) *This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt--a covenant they broke even though I had married them--the LORD's declaration. (33) "Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days"--the LORD's declaration. "I will place My law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. (34) No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying: Know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them"--the LORD's declaration. "For I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin."*

¹ Acts 10:11-17; Galatians 2:11-14

² Luke 3:16; 11:13; John 7:38-39

³ John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-14

⁴ Mark 13:11; Luke 21:12-15

In view of this, I believe we should turn to the Word of God, the wise counsel of church elders (and other wise people in our lives), our parents or the guiding light of our conscience, and Holy Spirit to make our decisions. Were we to be expected to cast lots I think that God would have made the matter clearer and given us step by step instructions on how to determine His will in that manner, as He has with every other matter of any import.

For further help on other means, consider the topical study "Determining God's Will".

For further information on casting lots, consider the topical study "Casting Lots"