

writer) that they prayed at the wrong end. There is nothing to indicate that they prayed before they made up their minds and had nominated two for the office. It seems that they prayed the wrong prayer. Listen to the prayer: Lord, which of these two, have you chosen? The truth of it as seen later, the Lord had not chosen either one of them.

Here we have an example of what goes on in many churches: a group taking God's personal business in their own hands, people trying to make a preacher. Do you think that Matthias should have been allowed to tell if he had a revelation from God that he was to take the place of Judas? Here was forwardness and zeal without divine direction. Is this a true statement of the facts? Peter made the motion that we now fill the places made vacant by the death of the twelfth man. Most likely it was seconded by many. Did they fully understand the import of what they were voting? Some people will vote for anything.

The Two Nominations Joseph Barsabas Justus, Matthias

Joseph or Barsabas called the Just may have been the Jesus who is called Justus in Col. 4:11 who was of the circumcision. It appears that they named one of the circumcision and one who was not. He fitted what they had in mind. Mark 6:3 speaks of a Joses, the brother of James the less. Whoever he was, he was of sufficient character to win the nomination. He was a candidate and made a good run but failed of election. Here is the beginning of factions.

The voting was fair. Each voted as he felt. Was Joseph the better of the two men? He was called the

Just which indicated character and maturity. Why was he not elected?

The ballots were cast and the choice fell on Matthias, who also was a good man, lacking in energy, push and initiative. Like many today, he was elected to an office by popular vote but from his performance and achievements, he did not have what it took. When they were not able to agree upon a successor and had to name two and go to the trouble of voting, that in itself should have shown them that God was not in the action. There is a school of thought which holds that neither one of these was God's choice but that He suffered them to satisfy their own wishes. God had another man in preparation to take this place made vacant by the death of Judas. There is a school of thought which holds that Judas had no place to be filled. In the light of later years when God wanted two certain men, the Spirit said to the church: Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them. Here in the election of a successor to Judas, there is no such direction. The congregation offered two men because they could not agree on any one man. Then they prayed for the Lord to show them which one was His choice. They should have prayed before they voted, "Lord do you want us to elect anyone to take the place of Judas?" Most likely the Lord would have said "No, I will do that myself" as he did do in the call of Saul whom we shall study in the next Study and whose gospel we shall take up in a later quarter.

Problems

1. From your reading of Acts 1:15, what condition did they find the body of Judas and what was the coroner's verdict in the light of

- present-day investigations of one found dead?
2. By what authority did Peter have the right to make the suggestion that he made concerning a successor to Judas?
3. How do we know that Joseph Barsabas Justus and Matthias had been one of the seventy?
4. What were the conditions for the man who was to succeed Judas as an apostle?
5. Do you agree with the author that Matthias was a good man but lacked ability, energy and initiative?
6. Of the schools of thought mentioned by the author, to which school do you belong?

Study XI

June 15, 1952

The Fourteenth Apostle

Saul or Paul

Acts 9:1-30

God's Choice of a Man

In our last study, we had before us the two men the church could not agree on so they cast lots or ballots and by majority vote made Matthias one of the twelve—to fill the vacancy caused by the suicide of Judas who was one of the original twelve. What became of their choice, we have no way of knowing. Evidently he was not the man God had ordained for the position.

Today we take up a study of the character of God's man. It is possible for a church to elect to office a person who is not God's choice. This happens when we get in a hurry and proceed without Divine guidance or consultation.

Just as Joshua was God's man to succeed Moses and Solomon was to succeed David, so was Saul to take up the apostleship left vacant by the death of Judas. He does not meet the qualifications set by Peter in

Acts 1:15, nor is he approved by Peter and his followers. He was never fully accepted by the Jerusalem crowd as seen in Acts 9:26. Yet he was God's chosen vessel according to Acts 9:15-16. The attitude expressed at Jerusalem concerning Saul was the general feeling of all who knew Saul as a persecutor. They were ever suspicious of him and doubted his right to be called an apostle. They based their objections upon the fact that he did not follow Jesus while he was alive nor was he a witness of the resurrection. It was the same feud then as we have now in many churches. The "Been Heres are against the Come Heres." The "Ins are against the Outs." If you will read all of the books of Paul (Greek for Saul) you will find the most of them begin with "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle." Rom. 1:1. I Cor. 1:1. II Cor. 1:1. Gal. 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through