

# The Upper Room (Part 2): Now Hiring

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## Introduction

### The Text

<sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. <sup>13</sup> And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup> All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

<sup>15</sup> In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, <sup>16</sup> "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." <sup>18</sup> (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup> And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

<sup>20</sup> "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, "'May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'; and "'Let another take his office.'

<sup>21</sup> So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." <sup>23</sup> And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:12–26)

### Part Two

A. This is our second week now looking at what's going on with these disciples in the "upper room" (v. 13). Remember, they've just said goodbye to Christ at the ascension, and they're waiting now for the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

1. Last time, I really only dealt with the first few verses and I simply made five opening observations, teasing out implications for us.
2. What I want to do this morning is focus in on vv. 15-26 in particular.
  - a. These disciples spent about a week in and out of this upper room it would seem. And in these verses, this is really the only thing we're told about what happened during that time. So clearly Luke found this, of all else that they did, to be of particular importance for us.

- B. And so, looking at these verses now, what I want do is bring your attention to four things in play here. I want to consider with you: (1) What They Wanted; (2) Why They Wanted It; (3) How They Got It; and (4) Who They Chose. We'll take the first two this week and the last two next week.

## (1) What They Wanted

### A Replacement for Judas

- A. In those days we're told that "Peter stood up among the brothers (and sisters)" (v. 15) there and he has something to say—he has something that he wants. What is it?
1. Well, to put it simply, he wants a replacement for Judas.
- B. Judas, you remember, was one of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus and yet, even Jesus himself knew that he would turn on him in the end.
1. So, in John 6:70-71, Jesus says to his disciples: "70 'Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.' 71 [John then clarifies for his readers' sake . . .] He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him."
- C. Here in Acts 1, as we see, Peter says that Judas "became a guide to those who arrested Jesus . . . [though] he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry" (vv. 16-17).
1. With this, we are reminded of that fateful night in Gethsemane, where Judas came under cloak of darkness with his sorry little band of Roman soldiers and temple officials "to betray the Son of Man with a kiss" (Luke 22:48).
    - a. After all that Judas had witnessed of him. After all Jesus had done for him. He "became a guide to those who arrested Jesus." It's a devastating thing to consider.
- D. And so Peter comes down in v. 25 and really sums up the matter for us: "Therefore, we need someone 'to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.'"
1. In other words: Peter and these disciples wanted a replacement for Judas in the apostolate because Judas himself wanted something else.

### How It All Ended

- A. And, for this first point, all I want to do is focus with you for a bit on just what happened with Judas and how it all ended up for him.
1. The text here elaborates quite extensively—even a bit gruesomely you may have noticed—on Judas and his tragic undoing. So clearly there is something in all this that the Spirit is trying to draw our attention to.
- B. All of this really comes out in that parenthesis given there in vv. 18-19. If you can stomach it, let's look at them again: "18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling

headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.<sup>19</sup> And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)”

C. Do you remember the story?

1. Greed had settled into his heart, love of money came crowded out love for God and neighbor—to such an extent that he was even willing to put a price on the Son of God’s head.
  - a. “I don’t care who he is, I don’t care how he’s loved me, served me, blessed me . . . I want money and I want it now. I don’t get the sense that he’s headed for the throne in the way I thought, and I want out. And I’m willing to cut my losses and hand him over to the highest bidder, even if the highest bid is still pretty low.”
2. And there were plenty among the religious leaders there in Jerusalem willing to drop a few coins if it meant they could get this man from Nazareth off the scene.
  - a. “[T]hirty pieces of silver” (Matt. 26:15). That’s what they were willing to give him.
    - i. According to mosaic legislation, thirty pieces of silver was the price you had to pay if somehow you’re ox had inadvertently killed the other man’s slave (Exod. 21:32).
3. In other words: Judas sold Jesus on the cheap. He was worth nothing to him.
  - a. “Just get me some quick cash. Something I can use now to pad my pockets. I’ll take a few shiny coins over the Christ any day!”

## The Field of Blood

A. But now we come to ask: So how did it go for Judas? Did his wager pay off? Was it a good move for him in the end?

1. Well, Peter says “with the reward of his wickedness [thirty pieces of silver] . . . [he] acquired a field” (v. 18).
  - a. You say: “Isn’t that great! Not a bad investment. Some good property by the Mediterranean I hope, right?” No.

B. Here’s how the story concludes . . .

1. Judas, when he sees all that his betrayal has set in motion, feeling a bit remorseful for it all, he returns to the temple and offers to give back the money if they’d turn back the clock on this.
2. But they won’t. They can’t. What’s done is done. A deal is a deal.
3. And so he throws the silver pieces down onto the floor in the temple.
4. And he runs out from there, and kills himself.

- C. Luke gives us the end result: “falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.”
1. You’re like: “That’s more detail than I needed to know.” But Luke wants us to see it. He wants to hold our head there for a moment, make sure we take it in. This is where sin leads you.
    - a. Judas tried to fill himself with something other than Jesus and he ended with nothing.
- D. But you say: “Hold up, it’s not entirely true, that he was left with nothing to show for all this, right? After all, he got the field, didn’t he?”
1. Well, I suppose that’s correct, but even this becomes a staggering picture for us of the dead-end pursuit of sin and idolatry.
- E. [Matt. 27:6-8](#) elaborates on this field for us like this: “<sup>6</sup>But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.’<sup>7</sup> So they took counsel and bought with them the potter’s field as a burial place for strangers.<sup>8</sup> Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.”
1. The temple treasury would have been the most natural place to deposit the money Judas left in the temple.
  2. But, because it was money they had used to secure the bloody fate of Christ, in an act of rank hypocrisy, they now pretend to be concerned for what is right and appropriate and according with God’s law.
    - a. And since this money is technically now unclean, they determine it best to purchase a burial-ground with it instead—for a cemetery is itself, after all, an unclean place.
      - i. So the field Judas acquired as the reward for his betrayal wasn’t a plot of land by the sea, a place with a view; it was a cemetery, a place for the dead, “Akeldama”, the “Field of Blood.”
- F. But when we consider the location of this Field of Blood, things get even more picturesque for us.
1. Though we can’t know with absolute certainty, tradition places this field actually in the valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem.
    - a. Throughout the gospels, Jesus uses this valley of Hinnom (Gk. [Gehenna](#)) as a metaphor for hell (cf. [Matt. 5:22](#); [10:29](#); [18:9](#)).
      - i. It was the place where the children of Israel once worshipped Baal and offered their children as burnt sacrifices to the god Molech.
      - ii. Because of this, the valley was later made into a garbage dump. And for centuries constant fires burned the trash deposited there.

(1) And this field was likely somewhere in the middle of all that.

(a) No wonder Peter in [Acts 1:20](#) picks up David's words from [Ps. 69:25](#) and says they've been fulfilled in Judas: "May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it."

G. What an image we're given here. This is where temptation, sin, and idolatry lead you.

1. It never looks that way up front—it's shiny, like pieces of silver; but it always plays out this way in the end.

- a. Nobody leaves Jesus because they want a Field of Blood.
- b. They leave him because they want a piece of the promised land and you think he's holding you back. "He's keeping the good stuff from me. He's in my way."

H. Remember how Satan worked with Jesus?

1. "I'll give you a kingdom . . . now." That's how he always works. "Your Father wants to give you a cross, isn't he mean? I'll give you a crown . . . today!"
2. But Satan doesn't tell you this kingdom he's going to give you, ultimately, it's not in the land of the living . . . it's in the land of the dead—it's in the bottomless pit, it's in the place of outer darkness, it's in the valley of Hinnom, it's in Gehenna, it's in the "Field of Blood."

## Read the Reviews

A. Satan makes his living on false advertising. He presents something one way, when in reality it's precisely the opposite.

1. And you know one of the ways we can get out of this trap, one of the ways we can wise up to what's happening, is by "reading the reviews" so to speak—learning from the mistakes of people like Judas that have walked down that path already.

- a. How did it end for him? Chances are it's going to be the similar for me.

B. Let me tell you a ridiculous story real quick that might illustrate this for you.

1. I remember, back in 2011, when Megs and I were driving cross county from San Luis Obispo to Philly where I was going to seminary, we mapped out our route and got all the stops and things.
2. And by and large we stayed in cheap places. Sometimes we just camped. Other times we were just in little motels and what not.
3. But the last stop before coming into Pennsylvania was in West Virginia. And I remember, when we booked through Priceline, they wanted to upgrade me, and they talked about how there was this great resort we could get into there, limited space available, 4 stars or whatever, golf course, pools, all this. The pictures looked great. "Book now to lock in this great deal!"

4. And I thought, this is the last spot, let's go all out, let's go for it, as kind of a grand finale, you know. So I booked it. It was a place called Lakeview Golf Resort. And we were excited.
  5. When we were struggling in all the other dumps, we were just like hang in until we get to Lakeview Golf Resort. It's going to be worth the wait.
- C. Well (I think you probably know where I'm going with this . . .), when we finally pull into this place, I'm telling you . . . it was a disaster.
1. You could tell that back in the day, it had something going on, it was the place to be.
  2. But that day had come and gone. And they hadn't upgraded or kept up with nothing. So it felt like walking into the twilight zone.
  3. We come in, the golf course was all overgrown and clearly not cared for.
  4. The pool, all the plaster was crusty and cracked.
  5. There was no one there. Like no one. We walked down these long halls with stained carpet and flickering old lights just to try to check in. It felt like something out of Ghostbusters, like the place was haunted.
  6. And then we got to the room. And I'm not kidding you, we couldn't do it. We didn't do it. There were stains on the bed. Like clumps of hair on the pillows. Old food was in the fridge. The phones didn't work. We were sure there was going to be bed bugs and all this.
  7. We literally walked out and went and slept in the car.
- D. And I remember it was at that point that I was like: "Maybe I should have read the reviews. Surely we're not the only ones who have experienced this."
1. So I started looking it up, and wouldn't you know it, they're all saying the same sort of thing.
    - a. One of my favorites, that I still remember, was when one guy suggested that a more fitting name for the resort would be, not Lakeview, but "Lakespew"—because the whole place was just disgusting.
- E. Every now and then, when I need a good laugh, I still look this place up and read the reviews. And, listen, it hasn't changed. Twelve years later. It's just as bad! Can I just read you a few from like the last few months?
1. Here's what Rachele Clegg writes: "[I am] absolutely mortified at how rundown and disgusting this place was. What you see on their website is not at all what you get. After attempting to check in around 5 PM, we were told our room was not ready yet and to wait at the bar. When we got the keys to our room (two hours later), we opened the door to find a dirty bathroom with towels and rags on the floor and two unmade beds — we were worried they had given us the keys to a room where someone was still staying! Turns out, the room just wasn't clean. . . . The 'resort' was mostly empty except for the few folks in town for the game. . . . The entire place felt like we were on the set of an Alfred Hitchcock film."
  2. Kalamity June writes: "Stay away. Stay far away! Locals know not to step foot on this property anymore. What used to be a place where locals headed to the bar to hang out and have a drink, or you could even buy a pass to use their pools or gym, is now such a desolate disgusting pretend motel. There are many other places to stay that are much nicer. Just don't with this place."

3. Another reviewer on Priceline responded to their form questions this way: *What did you like most? "Absolutely nothing! It was a depressing family getaway!" Was there anything you didn't like? "Everything! The pictures on the website are not TRUE! It was the worst decision of my life. I booked it for a 40th birthday weekend and it was insanely gross! It was the most disgusting decision of my life! PLEASE DONT WASTE YOUR MONEY!"*
- F. So listen, that's funny and all, but I'm trying to get at a profoundly serious point: Don't fall for Satan's false advertising.
1. Slow down, read the reviews. How does it play out for those who actually go there? How did it work out for Judas?
- G. Do you have thirty pieces of silver you're after right now? So shiny. Are you tempted to trade in Jesus for something? Sell him on the cheap if it gets you a little pleasure in the moment.
1. You want some sexual pleasure, so you'll step outside the biblical bounds for a little bit.
  2. You want revenge on someone who's hurt you, so you're willing to take it into your own hands instead of entrusting vengeance to God and loving your enemies as he calls you to.
  3. You want success at work, and if that means you have to hide your faith and relationship with Jesus, oh well, it's worth it right?
- H. It's not worth it. It's false advertising. Don't fall for Satan's scam. Read the reviews.
1. It's not Lakeview, it's Lakespew. It's not a mansion by the sea. It's a field of blood. It's a graveyard, and it's littered with the remains of all who've gone that way before you.
    - a. Wake up. Repent. Turn. Before, as for Judas, it's too late!
      - i. [Matt. 7:13-14](#): " <sup>13</sup> Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."
      - ii. [Mark 8:34-36](#): " <sup>34</sup> If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"

## (2) Why They Wanted It

### Two Reasons

- A. Now, let's consider why they wanted a replacement for Judas in the first place. Why not just carry on with eleven? Why did Peter stand up and lead them into this?
1. I'll give you two reasons—one that's a little more on the surface and another that's a little deeper down . . .

## Reason #1: Many Hands Make for Less Work

- A. For one thing, many hands make for less work, right? They wanted another apostle because there was a lot Jesus had given them to do.
1. He's talking in [Acts 1:8](#) how they're going to be taking the gospel from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth—well, we're going to need another brother in on this.
- B. This is, frankly, the more superficial reason. I'll give you the deeper one in a moment.
1. But, nevertheless, as we consider this, something really important comes out about what it means to be an apostle—what they're called to do and what qualifies them to do it.
- C. This is what really comes out for us there in [vv. 21-22](#). Peter wraps up his little pep talk this way: “<sup>21</sup> So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,<sup>22</sup> beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”
1. If I were to boil this down simply for us . . . .
    - a. What's an apostle called to do? He must be a witness to Jesus' resurrection.
    - b. What qualifies him to do such a thing? Well, apart from being personally commissioned by Jesus (which, as we see, is about to take place here with Mathias in particular) he must in fact be a witness of Jesus' resurrection.
      - i. In order to witness to it he must be a witness of it. That's the essence of the apostolate.
- D. It sounds very simple, and it is. But we so often forget this. And, when we do, it leaves us vulnerable to all sorts of problems.
1. Men, to this day, are still running about claiming to be apostles, claiming to speak with the same authority as these men of old—bringing to us new words from God.
    - a. And I just simply want to stop them and ask: Have you been a witness of the resurrected Christ? If not, you lack the essential qualification. You can't be a witness to it if you haven't been a witness of it.
      - i. Therefore, you have no right to speak in this all-authoritative manner which was the prerogative of the apostles alone.
- E. This is one of many reasons why I am not a Catholic.
1. The Pope, as they believe it, is a capital-A apostle, a successor to Peter—one who has the ability to issue new words from God recorded in church tradition and esteemed as on par with Scripture itself.



- a. This is how all manner of errors have been introduced into the church through the centuries.
  - i. Ours is now, not to write new Scripture, but to give ourselves to that Scripture, that apostolic deposit that's been recorded for us in the Bible. Full stop.
  
- F. Even Paul, when he's later added to the apostolate, how does it happen?
  - 1. He sees the risen Christ there on the Damascus road, doesn't he?
  - 2. He's caught up to the third heaven even somehow in the Spirit he tells us.
    - a. He's made a witness of the resurrection, therefore he can be called and commissioned as an all-authoritative witness to the resurrection.
      - i. So in [1 Cor. 9:1](#), when writing to a church in Corinth questioning the authenticity of his apostleship, he draws a direct line to this particular qualification: "[Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?](#)"
  
- G. And, in case we had any further doubt about there being apostles today in the same way as of old, Paul specifically refers to himself not just as the "[least of the apostles](#)" ([1 Cor. 15:9](#)) (because he persecuted the church at first), but also as the "[last](#)" of the apostles, because he is the last one to whom Jesus appeared after his resurrection: "[7 \[H\]e appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me](#)" ([1 Cor. 15:7-8](#)).
  - 1. I'm the last one to meet this qualification. I'm the last one added. After me, there will be no more.
  
- H. Oh Christian, stop chasing down a new word, a fresh revelation from God. You have all you need right here.
  - 1. Give yourself to these words and the Spirit will lead you into all truth and show you what you really need to know.

## Reason #2: There's Symbolic Significance to the Number Twelve

- A. Again, we might wonder: Why do they need twelve so bad? Does God have something against odd numbers? Is twelve Peter's lucky number? Is there something magical about it?
  - 1. No, but there is something of symbolic value to it.
    - a. It's intended to point us both backward to the old order that's been anticipating the arrival of Christ, and forward to the new order that's now being established in Christ.
      - i. In particular, there's a line that's being drawn here between the twelve apostles commissioned by Jesus and the twelve tribes of Israel that composed the covenant people of old.

B. And with this, in the progression from one to the other, we're to see both contrast and continuity.

1. Jesus has come not to obliterate the old order, with the twelve tribes, but to fulfill it—with the twelve apostles. He's doing something new (contrast) but it's rooted in something old (continuity).

a. Certainly, as we understand, he's come to create a new people, a new humanity in and around himself, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

i. Many scholars think, by the way, that this is reason for the other seemingly random note about numbers here in this text. You saw the parenthesis up in v. 15: "In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) . . ." You say, why 120? Why go out of your way to specify that number?

(1) Well, one commentator makes it plain for us: "The reason for the parenthesis about the number of disciples is that in Jewish law a minimum of 120 Jewish men was required to establish a community with its own council [a local sanhedrin]; in Jewish terms the disciples were a body of sufficient size to form a new community" (TNTC).

b. So there is something new forming in Jesus. But, again, we are not permitted therefore to disconnect it from the old that's come before. It's new but it's not novel. There's contrast, but continuity.

C. That's what's being communicated here. That's why we need twelve. It gets at the new and yet old thing that Jesus is doing with us in the church with the gospel.

1. This is precisely what's implied in the vision given to John concerning the new Jerusalem in Rev. 21:9-14: "<sup>9</sup> Then came one of the seven angels . . . <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— <sup>13</sup> on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. <sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

a. Do you see it? It's all figurative, of course. There's not going to be graffiti on the structures of heaven—like Peter's there tagging his name into the sidewalk or something. That's not what this is.

i. It's a prophetic image making plain for us the striking unity that exists within the plan and the people of God. The names of both the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles are there. And it all comes together in Jesus and his work at the cross.

- D. With this number twelve, then, and the reminder that the new thing in the church emerges from the old thing in Israel, we are protected from yet another temptation people in our day especially are so prone to.
1. It's true, like Judas we're tempted towards the shiny thing, right? The surface.
  2. But we're also enamored with the new thing. And a lot of times that's new, not in connection with the old, but new to the neglect of the old.
    - a. The old doesn't just seem outdated, it seems irrelevant.
- E. And here we're cautioned against that. There's a unity to the plan and people of God and we cut ourselves off from great blessing if we only read the New Testament, for example.
1. "We're people of the New Covenant, we don't need to go back to that. I don't want to read about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or Moses and Joshua, or David and Solomon. I want to jump straight to Jesus and the gospels."
    - a. I understand the impulse, but if you do that, in some ways, you're like a tree cutting yourself off from the root and expecting to still grow and bear fruit.
      - i. Who cares about the stuff underground. It's all about what's above ground, right? That's what we ultimately care about.
      - ii. Okay, but if it has no root, it won't bear any fruit.
        - (1) The underground prepares for and helps establish what happens above ground.
    - b. We'll see next week, Peter got guidance for what to do with this new community by looking back to the Old Testament. He quotes from [Pss. 69](#) and [109](#) as the basis for why Judas needed to be replaced.
- F. I officiated a memorial service last week for Megan's grandpa, Grandpa Bud.
1. He was 99. And he was WWII vet, in the army. He fought in the trenches, literally, in the Battle of the Bulge and things.
  2. And Megan's mom had saved these letters that Bud had written home from the battlefield. I was able to look through some of them, and it's just amazing. His faith. His attitude. His willingness to put his life on the line for others.
- G. And you know, one of the takeaways for me was: they just don't make men like this anymore.
1. The upcoming generations, we just grumble about everything. We're soft and selfish and cowardly. We've got that silver spoon in our mouths. We lose something of the grit and guts that the first generations had, the generations that earned this freedom for us.
    - a. It's like in [Judges 2:10](#), where just before cataloguing the spiral of the people of Israel, the author writes: "[And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel.](#)" They just took the

Exodus from Egypt and entrance into the Promised Land and all this for granted. They didn't remember what it took to get them there.

- i. That's why empires inevitably fall, right? These first generations fought and won. But then later generations get lazy, apathetic . . . and when an enemy at last arises, they're not ready, they don't have it.

- (1) And so we have to actively get back to our roots, remember why we enjoy the things we do, don't let it go to our head, don't get fat and comfortable.

H. And I share this because I think it can be similar if we forget that the new thing God's doing with twelve apostles is connected at the root to the stuff God was doing with the twelve tribes in the Old Testament.

- 1. I'll give you just one example and then we'll draw this to a close . . .

I. I was reading the other day in [Eph. 3](#) for my devotions. And there was just one word that leapt of the page at me, one word that I came to focus and meditate on. It was the word "access."

- 1. [Eph. 3:12](#): "[I]n [Christ Jesus our Lord] we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him." "[A]ccess." But access to what?

- a. Well he uses that same word earlier and spells it out: "[T]hrough him we both [Jew and Gentile] have access in one Spirit to the Father" ([Eph. 2:18](#)).

J. We just get to come boldly, confidently, freely into God's presence right now through Christ, you guys.

- 1. In the old days, only the high priest could be so bold as to walk into God's presence there in the Most Holy Place of the temple. And, even then, he could only do so on one day of the year, the Day of Atonement. And, even then, he approached, not with boldness and confidence, but with fear and trembling—because he is a sinner and God is holy and if he didn't get all the sacrifices and things just right as a covering for him, he could drop dead in that place.

- 2. But, you and I, now we just walk right in by way of the blood of Christ (cf. [Heb. 10:19](#)). The curtain has been torn. We have "access."

- a. He's done something incredible, something new . . . but it's connected to all that's come before.

- i. And we won't appreciate our privilege and access, and this grace in which we stand, if we forget from where we've come—if we neglect to connect the twelve apostles of the Lamb to the twelve tribes of Israel.

## Conclusion

A. So I suppose we could boil down this entire sermon to a couple closing exhortations:

1. First, don't be enamored by the shiny things of this world. It's false advertising. It's counterfeit. It won't satisfy. It'll leave you empty in the end. Read the reviews. Look at Judas.
2. But then, secondly, don't be so enamored with the new that you disconnect it from all that's come before. The only way to truly appreciate what you have now in the gospel and the new covenant is to see it as it's developed and growing out of the old. Read the history books. Look at the Old Testament.

B. In it all, trust Christ, hold onto Christ. He's the treasure, he's the point. And he's right here!