



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A2379 ~ The Choosing of Matthias.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

After the Lord Jesus Christ had left earth and ascended back to heaven, His close disciples devoted their time to prayer and praise while they waited for His promised gift of the Holy Spirit. While waiting, they particularly wanted to appoint another disciple and make their group number 12 again. Was did they think this to be so important?

When we read the Bible, some numbers appear more often than others. We can think of the number ‘40’ – Noah’s flood was caused by rain for 40 days and 40 nights, the Children of Israel walked 40 years in the wilderness after complaining against God, Jesus was tempted for 40 days in a wilderness and Jesus ascended back to heaven 40 days after His resurrection.

The number ‘12’ is repeatedly used in the Bible too. It is considered to represent governmental perfection. Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, had his name changed by God to ‘Israel’. Israel had 12 sons, which were later known as the 12 tribes of Israel. Following the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt, Moses built 12 pillars on Mount Sinai; 12 spies were sent to spy out the land of Caanan, Jesus spoke His first recorded words in the Bible at the age of 12 and when Jesus started His ministry, He chose 12 disciples.

There are many more number 12's used in the book of Revelation. However, conservative scholars remain wary about assigning great importance to the numbers used in the Bible, as some groups have taken extreme views, believing numbers can reveal the future or somehow uncover hidden information. Such activities can lead to the dangerous practice of making contact with demons, much the same as witchcraft.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, we hear the 11 remaining disciples choosing Matthias as the 12<sup>th</sup> disciple in their group.

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The choosing of Matthias is recorded in Acts, Chapter 1, and there's no further mention of him in the Scriptures. However, it is believed that all of these original 12 disciples, with the exception of John, were martyred for their faith in the Lord Jesus.

What makes a good church leader? Why did Jesus choose Peter to be a church leader once He was no longer with them?

When the women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus on Resurrection Sunday morning, as recorded in Mark, Chapter 16, the angel told the women to go and tell His disciples, and Peter, that Jesus had risen and that He was going ahead of them to Galilee. Why was Peter singled out to be named by the angel?

Sometimes when Jesus was in His ministry, Simon Peter seemed to be the leader of the disciples, yet at other times, Jesus had to rebuke Peter for saying and doing the wrong things. Peter was the disciple who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had told them all that Jesus was really Christ the Messiah, God's Son. But not too long afterwards, Peter tried telling Jesus that His stated mission of being killed and raised on the third day was wrong.

Peter's character was impulsive and rash. He was a man of quick actions. The time he was in the boat and saw Jesus walking on the water, he called out to Jesus to let him walk on the water too. Jesus allowed this. But Peter soon took his eyes off Jesus, feared the great waves around him and quickly began to sink. Jesus had to reach out and save him. Yet none of the other disciples put as much as a foot outside the boat. In our natural personalities, some of us avoid taking risks of any kind. But when we become Christians, we are called by the Holy Spirit to do many things beyond our comfort zone and in the name and power of Jesus Christ.

Even though Peter made mistakes, he was still given the privilege of being one of the three chosen to be with Jesus at His transfiguration on a mountain. As soon as the transfiguration was over, Peter blurted out things before he thought what he was saying. We can all speak unwisely in the excitement of the moment. And once the words leave our mouths, they cannot be taken back.

We all need to pray for kind words and the wisdom in how to deliver them. A pastor once said that when we are very loving, we will be less critical of others. Then it's easier to speak about problems, because our loving attitude creates a caring atmosphere in which to share. As God's children, we must work at building up good relationships with others, as well as learn to bury our criticism and condemnation of those who irritate us. If we give ourselves a prosecutor's role, we cannot also be in the witness box. While we are denouncing others, we are not announcing Jesus. Our task is to love everybody, forgive their sins and leave any judgment to God.

Peter was also a thinker. In Matthew, Chapter 18, Peter asked Jesus: “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” In Luke, Chapter 17, Jesus had said: “If your brother sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times then comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.” This was new teaching for the disciples. Perhaps Peter hadn’t been present when Jesus said those words. So Peter asked the question, hoping for an easy rule to follow.

But Jesus answered him, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times seven.” Jesus meant that no matter how many times our brother sins against us or how great his sins seem to be, we must keep on forgiving him like God forgives us. In these verses Jesus, doesn’t even say that our brother has to repent first in order to obtain our forgiveness. As we’ve been freely forgiven by God, so we must freely and unconditionally forgive others.

At the last Passover before He died, the Lord Jesus washed His disciples’ feet to teach them a lesson in humility. At first Peter objected to the cleansing, but with Jesus’ explanation, he agreed and asked for a more thorough spiritual cleansing than just his feet. After they’d all gone to the Mount of Olives, Jesus predicted that on that very night, every one of the disciples would stumble. Yet it was Peter who protested that he wouldn’t leave Jesus, even if all the others did. Peter still hadn’t learnt by then that what Jesus said would always come true.

In the dark hour of Gethsemane before His arrest, Jesus called His three closest disciples to be within call while He prayed. Peter’s name was mentioned first. When the Temple police and Roman soldiers came to arrest Jesus, it was Peter who lashed out with his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant. To protect Peter, his name wasn’t recorded as the guilty one in the first three Gospels. However, as the Gospel of John was written much later after Peter had been killed for his witness for Christ, John wrote his name.

When the disciples went fishing all night and yet caught nothing before Jesus provided them with a miraculous catch of fish, Peter was the first and only disciple to swim ashore and speak to His risen Lord. He was also the only one to be asked publicly if he really loved Jesus, and then, not one time, but three. It was Peter who stood up among 120 believers in the days before God's Holy Spirit was given, to settle the matter of appointing another disciple to replace Jesus' betrayer, Judas Iscariot.

What makes a good church leader? Was it that Peter was a bit older than the rest of the disciples and had much more life experience? If we ask people today about good leadership in the church, some will say they want a good preacher, others say one-on-one counsellor, or a good organiser or maybe a singer. Unfortunately, preachers are like everybody else, also having some strengths and weaknesses. When a congregation realises a pastor's weaknesses, they need to be in prayer about these things and support him.

Why did Jesus choose unschooled fishermen to be His disciples? Obviously any Jew who had been trained in the schools of the scribes and Pharisees would have thought just like them. Jesus started teaching and training men who weren't hardened by a set of rules. And yet He was totally successful in His training and their equipping, as none of the final 12 disciples fell away and went back to their old way of life.

Just as God grew Peter spiritually to become a great leader, God can also choose and use anyone for His purposes, provided that person keeps themselves humble and teachable. Listen to what writers of the past has said about Christian leadership:

“A spiritual leader, will first and foremost, have a calling from God. His work will not be his profession, but his calling. According to Scripture, virtually everything that truly qualifies a person for leadership is directly related to their character. It's not about style, status, personal charisma, clout, or worldly measurements of success. Integrity is the main issue that makes the difference between a good leader and a bad one.

In the Bible, a leader works as a servant. His concern is not for himself; his concern is not to give orders, to boss other people around, or to have his own way. His concern is to meet the needs of others. If he has a servant's heart, he will act like a servant and he'll react like a servant when he is treated like a servant. The chief danger of leadership is pride."

In 1 Timothy, Chapter 3, a list of instructions is given as to how churches should choose their leaders. It's best to let God choose the leaders for His church yet suitable candidates should be examined before they're nominated for a position. They should have no unrepented sin or wrongdoing in their lives, or any obvious bad habits or weakness of character. Otherwise, they might be accused by others and this would bring discredit on themselves and the church.

A leader also needs to be able to control his own children and exercise authority properly in his own family. If he cannot do this, then he'll be unable to exercise authority properly in the church. God tests potential leaders by first giving them a small responsibility. If they do that well, God will then give them a greater responsibility. New converts need to learn to submit humbly to the authority of others first. If a new convert receives a position of leadership too quickly, he will almost always become proud.

It's very important that the church be governed well, and that those in leadership should be men of good reputation. This is because the church is not the dwelling place of some dead idol; no! It's the place for meeting the living God. The church is God's household, as God Himself dwells in all holy Christians who meet together as one body in Christ, for they are the church.

In Matthew, Chapter 16, Verse 16, Peter said to Jesus: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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