

## SELECTION OF AN APOSTLE

**“Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen”  
(Acts 1:24)**

It is significant to note that the “heart” is mentioned when God selected an apostle to take the place of Judas. After the number of candidates was reduced to two, they prayed to God Who knew the hearts of both men. God would obviously select the man whose heart pleased Him the most. This reminds us of the selection of David to be the King of Israel. After rejecting David's older brother the Lord said to Samuel: **“Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Sam 16:7)** David, was selected to be the new king, as you know, because he was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

But let us return to our story. Since it is God Who knows the hearts of men, they cast lots to see whom God would choose. As you know, the lot fell to Matthias and he was added to the eleven apostles (Acts 1:26). We repeat. It seems obvious that Matthias the apostle, was not chosen because of his intellect, ability, or physical strength, but because of his heart.

It is reasonable to assume that this was also true of the other apostles as well. Jesus spent the night in prayer before selecting the original twelve (Lk. 6:12). None was chosen capriciously, or by accident. They were not chosen because of their wealth, education, or social standing. I think they were chosen because God liked what He saw in their hearts. This, of course, raises the age old question regarding Judas Iscariot. Was he always evil, or did his heart change? I am personally convinced that his heart changed. I believe that when Jesus chose Judas as an apostle his heart was as pure as that of Matthias.

This, then raises other important questions. How and when was the heart of Judas changed? Yes, it is possible for our hearts to change! The Bible is filled with references indicating this. In fact, no one can become a Christian without a change of heart. Ezekiel described the miracle of conversion with these words: **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezek 36:26).** Paul put it like this: **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor 5:17)** This “new creation”, of course, includes a “new heart”.

The Scriptures teach that our heart is the key to our conduct. **“For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.” (Mark 7:21-22)** When we get a “new heart” it means, of course, that our conduct is also new.

Our living heart is not static but is constantly changing. The Scriptures teach that our heart can be “turned” (Mal. 4:6); “hardened” (Mk. 6:52); “troubled” (Jn. 14:1); “opened” (Acts 16:14); “darkened” (Rom. 1:21); etc. It is possible for our heart to become darker and more evil with each coming day, or it is possible for our heart to become brighter and more pure with each coming day. It is difficult to imagine a heart that never changes.

We know for certain that Satan entered into the heart of Judas as he went out to betray Jesus (Jn. 13:2). We know for certain that Satan filled the heart of Annanias when he lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). We know for certain that Satan was attempting to destroy Simon Peter and sift him like wheat (Lk. 22:31). The question then arises, what was the difference between Peter, Judas, and Annanias? How was Peter able to resist Satan when others were not?

Judas obviously did not allow the devil to dominate his heart in a single day. His long journey downward began with a single step. The Scriptures teach: **“do not give the devil a foothold.” (Eph. 4:27).** Judas did! In some small and seemingly insignificant way Judas compromised his convictions and the devil got a foothold. A year or two later Jesus described Judas as a devil (Jn. 6:70). A few days before Calvary we learn he was also a thief (Jn. 12:6).

What about you and me? When God, Who knows the hearts of men, looks at us, what does He see?