

Seventh Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 1:12-26

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 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. 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. 15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, 16 “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. 17 For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” 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. 19 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.) 20 “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.’ 21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 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.” 23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

1:12-26 Luke intentionally writes two volumes. The first, the *Gospel of Luke*, focuses on the course of Jesus' earthly life from his conception by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary until his assumption into heaven. The second volume, the *Acts of the Apostles*, focuses on the narrative of the Church beginning with the twelve apostles and the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost. However, Luke's narrative of the Church is only a beginning and remains open ended. While the *Gospel of Luke* ends with Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, the Book of *Acts* ends with Paul's arrival in Rome, where he is left to preach and await his destiny (Acts 28). For Luke, the ministry of Christ continues in the apostles, and the apostolic ministry continues in the Church until Jesus' second coming. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The transition from the ministry of Christ to the ministry of the apostles is located, for Luke, precisely in Jesus' ascension. Luke includes this event in both his volumes; it brings his account of Christ's Passion to perfection (Luke 24) and inaugurates his narrative of the Church (Acts 1). Thus, the Ascension is recorded in two different ways. In Luke's Gospel, the Ascension is the fitting conclusion to Easter Sunday and the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is the High Priest who offers the benediction (Lk 24:50–53), perhaps the benediction Zechariah was unable to proclaim in Luke 1. However, in Acts, the Ascension is the conclusion of the apostles' catechesis. Like Elisha in 2 Kings 2, Jesus is taken into heaven right before the apostles' eyes. They receive a portion of his Spirit on Pentecost. Through the Spirit, the apostles' ministry is the continuation of Jesus' own work. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:12 returned – Responding to the angels' prompting, the apostles return to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke 24:52). Remembering Jesus' words that they were to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit, they made an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem their headquarters until that would happen, dividing their time

between this room and the temple (Luke 24:53). Whenever they met together, one in heart and mind, they joined together in worship and prayer. (LL)

Mount called Olivet. The ascension occurred on the eastern slope of the mount between Jerusalem and Bethany (Lk 19:28–29, 37. (CSB)

Sabbath day's journey. This distance was drawn from rabbinical reasoning based on several OT passages (Ex 16:29; Nu 35:5; Jos 3:4). A faithful Jew was to travel no farther on the Sabbath. (CSB)

Pious Jews were expected to stay within the permitted distance of 2,000 cubits (just over ½ mi) from home on the holy day (Ex 16:29; Nu 35:5; Jsh 3:4). (TLSB)

hodon. The theme of the road or the way is a prominent one in Luke's writing and ties his account together into one narrative. This theme is rooted in the Old Testament. Sin leaves Adam and Eve barred from "the way" that leads to the tree of life (Gen 3:22–24). The journey motif is essential to the narratives of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. *Exodus*, the title for the second book of the Pentateuch, literally means "the way of departure." "The way" is also an important catechetical theme (Psalm 1). In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is determined to journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51); this road to Jerusalem forms the substance of Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Lk 9:31). In Acts, "the Way" becomes the very name by which the Christian Church is known (Acts 9:2). Here in v 12, the return journey from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem is the first road walked by the apostles after Jesus' ascension. The apostolic Church journeys the intervening period between Jesus' ascension and his return (1:11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The Sabbath day's walk was set at 2000 paces, from one-half to ¾ mile. The expression was thought to go back to the time when Israel was wandering through the desert. The distance was supposed to be reckoned from the farthest tent on the fringe of the camp to the place of worship at the center. The base of the Mount of Olives is 2000 paces from the city. (PBC)

1:13 room. Probably an upper room of a large house, such as the one where the Last Supper was held (Mk 14:15) or that of Mary, mother of Mark. (CSB)

Possibly the site of the Last Supper, though Luke uses a different word here than in his Gospel. (TLSB)

huperōion. Luke notes that the Church originates in the "upper room." This room appears to be the same room where Jesus had the disciples prepare the Passover feast (Lk 22:12). In Luke 22, this room is called a *kataluma*, or "guest room." *Kataluma* connects the room of the Passover feast with Jesus' birth narrative. In Luke 2, there is no *katalumati* for Jesus, so he is laid in a manger instead. Thus, it seems that the *kataluma* in which Jesus was destined to dwell is the upper room where he institutes the Sacrament of his Supper. This same room is the place in which the Church is given birth (Acts 2:1–2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

where they were staying – Luke is setting the scene for the replacement of Judas. At the same time Luke expands the group that gathered together each day. He adds the women, probably those at the crucifixion and the resurrection. The only name mentioned is Mary, Jesus' mother, who was in John's care. Without comment or explanation Jesus' brothers also are listed as part of the worshipping and praying group. Named as unbelievers by John (7:5), it is highly probable that the resurrection of Jesus brought them to faith so that now we find them here. (LL)

Bartholomew. Apparently John calls him Nathanael (see Jn 1:45–49; 21:2). (CSB)

James son of Alphaeus. The same as James the younger (Mk 15:40). (CSB)

Zealot. “the Zealot” is to say that he belonged to a sort of “freedom party” of political activists, people who were not only zealous in the Jewish religion but who also sought freedom from Roman rule. It is a mixed group of ordinary men with ordinary names. The Lord would accomplish extraordinary things through them. (PBC)

Judas son of James. Not Judas Iscariot, but the same as Thaddaeus (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18). (CSB)

1:14 *with one accord* – For a great many people religion is an occasional thing, something to enjoy on great festivals, something to rely on in time of danger. But real religion is more than an emergency measure. It is continual. It sets the pattern of man’s daily thought and practice. Like regular meals, it silently stocks the storehouses of his spirit with power. It works by the law of accumulated reserves. Tracks are laid, patterns formed, habits established. Like the continual presence of the masterworks of art, it cures the heart of second-rate satisfactions. It is hard for a man brought up on the music of Bach to be completely satisfied with the tunes of tin-pan alley. It is hard for a person raised in the company of Jesus to be satisfied with chiselers and compromisers. (IB)

Because the early Christians were close to Christ, the earliest Church had a natural unity that has since been tragically fractured. (TLSB)

homothumadon. This word, often translated with reference to being in harmony or in one accord, is a common expression describing the Church in Acts (2:46; 4:24; 8:6). The *thumos* root suggests the notion of desire or passion (7:57; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29). The Church shared one and the same desire or passion, that is, a desire for Christ and his presence. Similar language is used in Luke’s account of the Lord’s Supper (Lk 22:15). Jesus begins his celebration of the Passover by saying that he has desired with a great desire (*epithumiai epethumēsa*) to eat this Pasch with his disciples. While the devil inspires a passionate hatred toward Christ and his disciples, Jesus unites the Church in a passionate love for God and for one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

devoting themselves to prayer – With undivided attention, their hearts and minds were open to receive the promised Spirit. (TLSB)

with the women. Possibly wives of the apostles (cf. 1Co 9:5) and those listed as ministering to Jesus (Mt 27:55; Lk 8:2–3; 24:22). (CSB)

Mary the mother of Jesus. Last mentioned here in Scripture. (CSB)

brothers. These brothers would include James, who later became important in the church (12:17; 15:13; Gal 2:9). (CSB)

Listed in Mark 6:3; James and Jude were the most notable in the Early Church. See p 2134 in TLSB.

tois adelphois. The gathering in the upper room consists of the eleven apostles, the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. This gathering constitutes the origins of the Church and is described in terms of family relations (v 15; 15:7, 13). The reordering of the family of God is a significant theme in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 3:8; 8:19–21; 11:27–28; 12:49–53; 13:28–30; 14:25–26; 15:11–32; 19:9; 20:9–18). This gathering also recalls Luke’s account of the resurrection of Jesus (Lk 24:1–11), which mentions the eleven, the women, Mary, and all the rest. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:15-26 Luke describes the earliest church in the interim between the ascension and Pentecost. The visible physical presence of Jesus in the church is gone, and the Spirit has not yet been poured out. The community is led by Peter. He has gained popularity among the “believers” (brothers), so named here for the first time in Acts. This designation became the standard nomenclature for the group. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:15 *in those days* – During the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost. (TLSB)

The purpose of this gathering was to discuss the appointment of a replacement for Judas. Luke makes a few interesting comments regarding the involvement of the body of Christians, the use of Scripture, and the use of prayer. The 11 disciples felt compelled to include the larger group of “brothers” to help in selecting a replacement. One hundred twenty persons were present. Perhaps the number is symbolic of 12 times 10 or simply an indication of the growth of the church. But it certainly indicates the involvement of members of the body of Christ, as well as their unity and togetherness (*epi to auto*), when decisions need to be made. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

ōsei hekatōn eikosi. Luke likes to use *ōsei* to change a literal number into a more theologically significant number. (In Lk 9:28, he uses it to place the transfiguration “about eight days” after the preceding events; both Matthew and Mark place the transfiguration “six days” after the events.) Here Luke approximates the number of those gathered to be 120 (12 × 10), which may connect the Church to the new Israel. Jesus had already made this connection for the apostles when he told them at his Supper that they would “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk 22:30). In Acts 1:6, Jesus answers the apostles’ question about the restoration of Israel with reference to the Church and the gift of the Spirit. The connection between the apostolic college and the twelve tribes of Israel may be a key in Peter’s call to restore the apostolic band to its proper number. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

en tais hēmerais tautais, “in [during] those days,” the period of time that followed the ascension. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Peter stood up – His words and the believers’ subsequent actions show that a major change has taken place in Jesus’ followers. Peter is now an interpreter of Scripture and of God’s purpose for the church. His insight into Scripture and God’s purpose will be demonstrated in his missionary speeches, but even before the mission begins he is presented as one who knows what “was necessary” now (1:16) and what Scripture indicates to be “necessary” now (1:20-22). Peter is taking over a major function of the departed Jesus. It might seem that there has been no preparation for this sudden shift in role, but that is not true. The language with which Peter begins his speech in 1:16 echoes the language that Jesus used when he was last presented as Scripture interpreter. (Tannehill)

In a suddenly widening circle of disciples, Peter strengthened his brothers (Luke 22:32) as Jesus had predicted (John 21:15-17). The location in vv. 15-26 may no longer be the upper room of v. 13, due to the number of people. A courtyard would better accommodate such a large group. (TLSB)

en mesōi tōn adelfōn, “in the midst of the brothers.” Peter arises to speak the Word, which gathers a community of believers around itself; thus, he who speaks the gathering Word is said to stand in the midst of those gathered by that Word. “Brothers” is used in a figurative sense of fellow members of the gathered community. NIV translates “believers,” which speaks to the relationship of each to the Lord, but lacks the note of mutual relationship and the role of the gathering Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

1:16 *brothers* – *edei plērōthēnai tēn grafēn*. *edei* is an indicative imperfect active of *dei*, indicating something that is compulsory, necessary, inevitable. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

the Scripture had to be fulfilled. For the Scripture referred to see. Both before and after Christ came, numerous psalms were viewed as Messianic. What happened in the psalmist’s experience was typical of the experiences of the Messiah. No doubt Jesus’ instruction in Luke 24:27, 45–47 included these Scriptures. (CSB)

All Scripture is God-breathed, with the Holy Spirit as its primary author. (TLSB)

edei plērōthēnai. This language recalls Jesus’ instructions to the disciples before his ascension (Lk 24:44). *edei* is at the heart of Jesus’ Passion statements and refers to his death and resurrection as a divine necessity. It is necessary because the heavenly Father has ordained it. In Lk 24:44–47, there are three things counted as a divine necessity. The Scriptures *must* be fulfilled, Christ *must* suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness *must* be preached to all nations. These three necessities become the substance of the apostolic sermons in Acts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

There is a divine necessity (*dei*) that Scripture must be fulfilled. However, God did not decree the betrayal; he merely foretold it. Judas fulfilled that prophecy of his own free will. This prophecy was through (*dia*) David as the instrument of divine inspiration. The Holy Spirit remained the speaker and the cause of inspiration. Interestingly, Scripture not only foretells events about Jesus, but also the fate of people other than Jesus (Ps 69:25)—in this case, Judas—as well as the action of the church (Ps 109:8) in replacing Judas. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

fulfillment of prophecies is dependent on human acquiescence. (Concordia Pulpit *plērōthēnai* is an aorist passive infinitive. The will of God that is set down in his Word must be fully accomplished. The NIV, “the Scripture had to be fulfilled,” should not be taken to mean that the Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The language with which Peter begins his speech in 1:16 echoes the language that Jesus used when he was last presented as Scripture interpreter: “It was necessary that the Scripture be fulfilled” Luke 24:44. At that time Jesus “opened the mind” of his followers “to understand the Scriptures.” The disciples could not understand the scriptural necessity of Jesus’ suffering prior to the revelation of the risen Messiah (Luke 18:31-34). Now they can, and this permits them to understand many things, including the defection of Judas, as part of God’s way of working in a resistant world. In Luke 24:44-46 Jesus spoke of “all that

is written...concerning me,” including his suffering. This could include the role of the betrayer, especially when the first of Peter’s quotations in Acts 1:20 comes from Psalm 69, a psalm from which a number of references to Jesus’ passion in the New Testament are drawn. Thus we are probably to infer that Peter is either reminding his audience of what Jesus had directly taught them from the Psalms (which are explicitly mentioned in Luke 24:44) or is following Jesus’ lead in finding references to the events of the passion there. Faced with Satan’s onslaught on the disciples during his arrest and death, Jesus asked Peter to “strengthen your brothers” following Peter’s own recovery (Luke 22:32). Peter becomes the leader of the early church. What Peter does through his speech in Acts 1:16-22 may seem a rather small thing compared to the momentous events reported before and after. Nevertheless, it can be understood as an important step in strengthening the community in the faith that was shaken by Jesus’ arrest and death. Reconstituting the twelve is an important step in preparation for witness to Israel. This is an act of faith in Jesus and a first step in obedience to his new call. Peter’s faith inspires the faith of others. (Tannehill)

Human eyes are blind to the reality of Jesus’ presence even when he stands directly in sight, and ears are deaf to his words even when he speaks them audibly, unless Jesus himself heals the spiritual blindness and deafness (Luke 4:18-19). Eyes and minds must be opened and faith created by God in order to understand the mystery of the kerygma of his crucified and risen Son. Both salvation and its apprehension through faith are God’s work. Jesus reverses the incomprehension and confusion exhibited by the disciples after his earlier passion predictions (Luke 9:44-45; 18:31-34). This illumination of darkened minds comes through Jesus’ own radical Christological interpretation of the OT Scriptures. (Concordia Commentary – Luke)

The Holy Scriptures were of critical importance to Jesus, and the written Word of God is important for His people today too. (LL)

Holy Spirit spoke – hēn proeipen to pneuma to hagian dia stomatos dauid, “which the Holy Spirit put into the mouth of David” (author’s translation). The will of God is neither unknown nor a matter of conjecture, for he has caused it to be spoken. Here the will and Word of God and his Spirit are tied together: his will is revealed in the Word put into man’s mouth by the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

mouth of David Co-author with the Holy Spirit of the psalms quoted in v 20. As a prophet, David glimpsed the future fulfillment of his own calling in the life of Christ. (TLSB)

Judas – Our Lord regarded Judas’s betrayal as the fulfillment of prophecy. (TLSB)

a guide – hodēgou. Peter describes Judas as a “guide” or a leader in the way for those wanting to arrest Jesus. This language is used in the LXX version of the Psalms for God’s shepherding work (Ps 23:2; 25:5; 107:30); in Lk 6:39 referring to “blind guides” on the way of salvation; in Jn 16:13 of the Spirit guiding the Church into all truth; and in Acts 8:31, where the Ethiopian eunuch expresses his need for one to guide him in understanding the Scriptures. Thus, Peter seems to suggest Judas was an apostle in the kingdom of Satan, a kind of pastor for those seeking to kill Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:17 share - Usually rendered as “lot” and has two senses in the Bible: a plot of land, one’s goodly heritage in the Promised Land, and means of determining God’s will, carried out prayerfully and solemnly. (TLSB)

“For” (*hoti*), though normally translated in a causal sense, here refers to the point on which the prophecy rests. Judas was an apostle who was numbered with the 12 and obtained the rank (*elachen*, “obtained by lot”) of the apostolic ministry of Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

katerithmēmenos (perfect passive participle), “he had been counted, numbered.” *elachen ton klēron*, “he was allotted his portion.” It was not through his own decision or efforts that Judas came to be included among the Twelve, but rather he received it (*elachen* from *lanchanō*). Neither was it by mere chance or fate, though his selection is rightly called by lot (*klēros*). The NIV translation, “he was one of our number and shared in this ministry,” blunts the notion of supernatural selection found in the Greek text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

katērihmēmenos. Peter refers to Judas as one “numbered” among the apostles. This is a perfect passive participle, which recognizes the divine origins of his place in the apostolic office. God established Judas as an apostle by lot (*ton klēron*). This language may suggest that Peter sees the original number of apostles as a divinely ordained number that must now be restored. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

in this ministry – The description of apostleship as diakonia (ministry or service) is also noteworthy. The closest preceding occurrence of this noun or its related verb is in the Last Supper scene, as Jesus corrects the apostles’ rivalry over rank and instructs them in the special quality of their future leadership. The leader, Jesus says in Luke 22:26, must become “like one who serves.” Jesus is speaking of the servant who waits on the table, in contrast to the honored participants in a banquet. In Luke diakonia (service) and diakonew (serve) always refer to the work of preparing and serving food, work normally performed by those regarded as social inferiors, such as women and servants (see Luke 4:39; 8:3; 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; 22:26-27). /// In John 13 – foot washing – Jesus does what only non-Jewish slaves did. /// Yet at the Last Supper Jesus not only describes his own role in these terms but also makes such service a norm for the apostles. The repeated description of apostleship as “service” in Acts 1:17, 25 can remind us of this fact and may imply that the early church now recognizes that its leadership must conform to Jesus’ way of service. (Tannehill)

1:18-19 Luke digresses from Peter’s speech to give an account of Judas’s fate. (TLSB)

1:18 reward – Payment Judas received from the Council for betraying Christ. He bought a field indirectly, because the Council did this with the money Judas returned. (TLSB)

acquired a field. Judas bought the field indirectly: The money he returned to the priests (Mt 27:3) was used to purchase the potter’s field (Mt 27:7). (CSB)

misthou tēs adikias. The notion of divine reward for work done is prominent in Luke’s Gospel (Lk 6:23, 35; 10:7). Peter sees the “field of blood” as the “reward” for Judas’s service in the ministry of death. Thus, later in his prayer, Peter refers to Judas as one who “turned aside to go to his own place” (v 25). Judas’s dwelling place is also the subject of Psalm 69, quoted by Peter (v 20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Judas does not return the money as a sign of repentance, but goes to buy a farm with the payment for his wicked deed. This action stands in direct contrast to his “having a share in this ministry.” Rather than be one of those who “left their own things” and will “sell their farms” and “call nothing their own,” Judas separates from the group by his purchase of property for himself. We notice that like Ananias and Sapphira, who will later be described as doing the same thing, Judas is said to have been possessed by Satan (Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3), and to have “entered into a conspiracy” to get money (Luke 22:4-6; Acts 5:9). Spiritual disaffection is symbolized by physical acquisitiveness. (Sacra)

Most Bible versions report vv 18 and 19 in parentheses, indicating that it would seem unnecessary for Peter to include this information in his speech, since most people were aware of it already (see notes on v 19). Luke later adds this information for the benefit of future readers. This man named Judas did not personally purchase the piece of real estate. The money that he received for betraying the Son of God was returned to the temple. Subsequently, the chief priests decided to use it to purchase the field of blood (Mt 27:3–8) “as a burial place for foreigners.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

fell headlong. Mt 27:5 reports that Judas hanged himself. It appears that when the body finally fell, either because of decay or because someone cut it down, it was in a decomposed condition and so broke open in the middle. Another possibility is that “hanged” in Mt 27:5 means “impaled” and that the gruesome results of Judas’s suicide are described here. (CSB)

The rope Judas hanged himself with (Mt 27:5) likely broke, causing his already decaying corpse to fall and rupture. (TLSB)

1:19 *Akeldama*. An Aramaic term, no doubt adopted by people who knew the circumstances, for the field was purchased with Judas’s blood money (Mt 27:3–8). (CSB)

Luke simply reminds his readers that the whole city knew the story of the field of blood. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:20 *it is written*. Two passages of Scripture (see NIV text notes) were put together to suggest that Judas had left a vacancy that had to be filled. (CSB)

Vicious attacks on King David were ultimately directed at God and gave a preview of the trouble in store for Christ, the greater David. (TLSB)

become desolate – The first quotation is based on Ps 69:25 (LXX; H. T. 68:26). *ērēmōmenē*, “be brought to ruin,” becomes *erēmos*, “abandoned, forsaken,” and *en tois skēnōmasin*, “in the dwellings,” is left out. In Peter’s quotation from Ps 109:8 (LXX; H. T. 108:8), *laboi*, a wish, becomes *labetō*, a command. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Peter uses the common formula for introducing an Old Testament Scripture: “it has been written” (*gegraptai*). In two passages (Ps 69:25; Ps 109:8) the psalmist indicates that a habitation (*epaulis* can also mean “homestead,” “cottage,” “cabin,” but here refers to an office) has become vacant and another person should take this “place of leadership.” Peter adapts this prophecy by equating the leadership position with an office in the church (*episkopēn*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

another take his office – The fact that the number of apostles must be twelve according to the original choosing of Jesus appears to have been taken for granted. That this was necessary in order to match the 12 patriarchs, the 12 tribes of Israel, and the 12 thrones awaiting them to judge these 12 tribes was undoubtedly also the basis for this decision. (LL)

episkopēn, “office.” The KJV, “bishoprick,” is based on the use of the masculine of this noun to designate the ecclesiastical leader, the liturgical president and overseer of the assembly, the bishop. Here the word is used to designate official leadership and responsibility. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Judge 12 tribes – This refers not to condemning old, unbelieving Israel, but to the responsibility of shepherding and oversight in the new Israel, the church. This is the Lukan equivalent to Jesus giving to Peter the keys of the kingdom in Matthew (16:19 and his bestowal of the office of the keys upon the disciples in John (20:22-23). The OT judges were saviors and deliverers who led the people of God to repentance and faith (e.g., Judges 2:10-23; the LXX uses the verb *krino* “to judge,” for their leadership [e.g., Judges 10:2-3]). So too the apostles and pastors in the apostolic ministry will “judge” in the following way:

The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacrament, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent. (Concordia Commentary – Luke)

1:21-22 Because Peter has offered biblical warrants regarding this election, it is necessary (*dei*) that one of the men (*andrōn*) should become one with them in their future travels. This successor should have at least two qualifications: (1) he must have been with Jesus and the disciples from Christ’s baptism to his ascension, and (2) he must have been witness to the resurrection, as were the other disciples. Peter determined the requirements, but the final choice was left to the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:21 men – Greek *aner*, “male,” “husband.” Christ chose only men for the apostolic ministry (Luke 6:13-16). He also treasured the service of women (Luke 8:2-3; 24:9; Acts 9:36). The early Christians maintained a clear division in the callings of men and women. (TLSB)

Note from Luke 8:2-3... Women followed Jesus, support the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. This is striking, because females did not normally follow Jewish rabbis. (TLSB)

Note from Luke 24:9... Some modern interpreters emphasize that since God chose to have women first bear witness to the resurrection, this means God specially ordained the for service in the Church. This argument fails on two counts: the angels were actually the first to bear witness to His mighty acts (cf. Psalm 145), even children (Psalm 8:2). The “go-and tell” passages in the Gospels are not about ordaining

or commissioning people to offices in the Church, but about people acting as couriers or witnesses (e.g., Matthew 11:4; 18:15; Mark 5:19; Luke 7:22; 13:32). (TLSB)

Note from Acts 9:36... Tabitha's example shows that as believers grow in faith in Christ, they bear the fruit of faith, imitating Christ. Cf. Matthew 25:31-40; Acts 2:44-45; 1 Timothy 5:3-16. (TLSB)

accompanied us. Ministered publicly. (CSB)

He was a witness to the whole public activity of Christ, up to the resurrection. "in and out" is a Hebrew idiom encompassing everything Jesus did (cf. Dt. 28:6). (TLSB)

sunelthontōn is an aorist active participle, used here of those who lived and traveled with the Lord through his public ministry until after his resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

1:22 *with us a witness to his resurrection.* Apparently several met this requirement. On this occasion, however, the believers were selecting someone to become an official witness to the resurrection—thus, a 12th apostle (v. 25). (CSB)

martura tēs anastaseōs. The qualifications for the apostolic office are clearly described. The man must be a witness to the narrative of Jesus' life with special emphasis on his resurrection from the dead. This language refers to Jesus' own words. In Lk 24:44–48, Jesus speaks of the divine necessity that governs the fulfillment of the Scriptures, his own Passion, and the preaching of repentance and forgiveness in his name. In Lk 24:48, Jesus concludes by calling the apostles "witnesses of these things." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:23 *Barsabbas.* Means "son of (the) Sabbath." This patronymic was used for two early Jewish Christians, possibly brothers. One was Joseph (here); the other was Judas, a prophet in Jerusalem who was sent to Antioch with Silas (15:22, 32). (CSB)

Justus. Joseph's Hellenistic name. Nothing more is known of him. (CSB)

Hebrew, Aram, and Latin names. Considerable detail concerning someone not chosen or not mentioned again. He was likely well known in the Early Church. (TLSB)

Matthias – Short form of Mattathias, a name famous as a result of the war to liberate Israel from the tyranny of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (cf. 1 Macc. 2:1). (TLSB)

There were only two nominees who could fulfill the requirements: Joseph, called Barsabbas, and Matthias. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:24-25 The apostles hold together despite Judas's defection; they remain intact even after the martyrdom of James the Great (cf. 12:2). (TLSB)

1:24 *you have chosen* – Apostles are chosen directly by Christ Himself. He appoints overseers and elders indirectly through the mutual consent of clergy and people (cf. 20:17, 28). (TLSB)

Luke emphasizes the importance of prayer here and also throughout his gospel. The gathering implores the Lord to “show us which of these two you have chosen.” Peter prayed directly (*su*) to the Lord Jesus. “You have chosen” (*exelēxō*, aorist) indicates that Jesus had already made the choice, but he had not revealed the name of that apostle to the congregation or to Peter. Peter set an example for all congregations to follow in selecting not only pastors but also other people for congregational leadership. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:25 *this ministry* – In the NT, almost always specific, a concrete form of service laid on a particular person. (TLSB)

apostleship – The ambassadorial office Jesus instituted in Luke 6:13. (TLSB)

apostolēs, “[of] apostleship,” is literally a mission or a sending for the purpose of accomplishing a particular goal. Although Matthew uses the appellation *apostolos* very sparingly and prefers “the Twelve” (*dōdeka*), and even then only with reference to their initial mission (Matthew 10), Luke appears to use the term more generally. In this narrative, however, the reference is clearly to the Twelve whose full number is fully restored when Matthias is added to the Eleven (*hendeka*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

ministry – In the NT, almost always specific, a concrete form of service laid on a particular person. (TLSB)

diakonias, from *diakonia*, “ministry,” is descriptive of service toward others, charitable support and help, and of ministerial service to God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The job description is stated in two words: “ministry” (*diakonias*) and “apostolic” (*apostolēs*), which grants the new disciple the full right of apostleship, equal to that of the 11. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:26 *cast lots*. See Pr 16:33. By casting lots they were able to allow God the right of choice. The use of rocks or sticks to designate the choice was common (see 1Ch 26:13–16; see also notes on Ne 11:1; Jnh 1:7). This is the Bible’s last mention of casting lots. (CSB)

klerous, “lots”; in the original sense, some small object thrown to make a determination, as in Mk 15:24. The word is also used to indicate that which has been assigned (Acts 8:21). In the ancient world this was not seen as mere chance; it signified a determination made by fate or destiny. The term is used here, in conjunction with its occurrence in v 17 referring to Judas, to indicate that the choice of a man to complete again the number of the Twelve is no more in the hands of men or blind fate than was the choosing of the Eleven and Judas. It is the Lord’s doing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

klērous. The “lot” (*klēron*) is the way Judas entered the apostolic band (v 17), and so it becomes the way Matthias takes his place. The *klēron* is the word used in the LXX referring to the lot of the priests (Deut 10:9). From this word, we get the term “clergy,” which means one whose portion or destiny or lot is found in God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

All offices and duties to be performed in the OT temple were chosen by lot. Names of candidates were written on stones which were put into a vessel, which was then shaken. The name on the first stone to fall out of the vessel was elected. (LL)

The name of Matthias was selected, and he was added to the number of the apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

eleven apostles – Twelve apostles were needed to confront the 12 tribes of Israel on the day of Pentecost. (TLSB)

1:12–26 The disciples and others seek the Lord’s will concerning the candidate of His choice to replace Judas as a leader of the Church, the new Israel. Today, entrust your future to the Lord in prayer. He will prepare your way before you. Since our Lord is present with us till the end of the age, He will knit together in love His faithful people with Himself and with one another. • Jesus, our King, may we never tire of watching in prayer before Your throne, and may Your will be our delight. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 John 5:9-15

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. 10 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. 11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

5:9 *testimony of God*. The Holy Spirit’s testimony, mentioned in vv. 6–8. (CSB)

God Himself testified to this man, Jesus of Nazareth (Mt 17:5; 2Pt 1:17). (TLSB)

Here the apostle shows with what confidence we should accept the testimony of the Gospel: If the witness of men we receive, the witness of God is greater, for this is the witness of God which He has witnessed concerning His Son. Here we again have an argument from the smaller to the greater. It is the custom among men to accept the witness of other men, unless there is good reason for suspecting trickery. The witness of God, therefore, must be infinitely more certain and credible, by as much as God is higher than any mere man. The Gospel is the testimony of God Himself concerning the salvation which was earned by His Son Jesus Christ. In holding before our eyes the fact of Christ’s baptism and of the shedding of His blood in His great Passion, the Holy Ghost, being Himself true God, gives us evidence that cannot be gainsaid that Christ redeemed the world, all men, from sin, death, and the power of the devil. (Kretzmann)

If one already receives the witness of men, then one is all the more in duty bound to receive the witness of God. So, again, the so-called inner reasons argue very strongly for the retention of the words in verses 7–8. (Stoeckhardt)

5:10 *testimony in himself.* God testifies within every believer to the truth of His Word concerning His Son. (TLSB)

Whoever does not believe God has made Him a liar. Any and all who teach that Jesus is not always, and in all places, both God and man in one person are making God out to be a liar. “Absolution is the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, it necessarily requires faith.... If the heart doubts, it regards those things that God promises as uncertain and of no account” (Ap XIIA 61–62). (TLSB)

Faith is essentially the acceptance and application of this fact: He that believes on the Son of God has this witness in himself; he that does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son. Every one that believes in the Son of God has the trust, the conviction, the confidence that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son of God and the Savior of the world, and that this salvation applies to the believer himself. The Holy Spirit, who lives in the heart of the believer, assures him of this fact, seals this fact in his heart through the Word of the Gospel. Just as sure as the Holy Spirit is the Truth and cannot lie, just that surely we may accept the message of our redemption through Christ. The unbelievers, on the other hand, are not only foolish, but also blasphemous, for in refusing to believe the testimony of God in the Gospel concerning His Son and the redemption through His blood, they declare God to be a liar by treating His historic testimony as unworthy of belief. (Kretzmann)

5:11 *God gave us eternal life.* As a present possession. (CSB)

John gives a summary of God's witness: And this is the witness, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. That is the testimony of the Gospel; that is the wonderful news which we find on every page of the apostle's letter; that is the message which all the apostles proclaimed, that God has given us eternal life, that this life is a free gift of His grace and mercy. For there is nothing in us that should merit such a reward; the only reason why God has given it, why He is holding it out to all men, is His divine love in Christ Jesus; for it is in His Son that we have this eternal life, if we place our entire trust in Him, if we rely on His perfect atonement in life and in death. (Kretzmann)

The testimony is the message that God gives us eternal life in His Son, Jesus. Only those who are in His Son through faith have eternal life. There is no life outside of this God-man Jesus Christ. (TLSB)

5:12 Therefore the apostle adds: He that has the Son has life; he that has not the Son of God does not have life. We Christians, having received the message of salvation, having had it imparted to us through the Word and the Sacraments, place our trust in Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, our Redeemer. By this token we have eternal life as a definite possession. Its actual enjoyment, the bliss of seeing God face to face, is still a matter of the future, but there can be no question as to our being the possessors of the gift of eternal life. The testimony of the Gospel is too certain, too definite to admit of doubt. He who foolishly rejects the Son of God, who is also his Savior, thereby rejects eternal life and deliberately chooses everlasting death and damnation. The unbeliever has only himself to blame if he is given over to that lot which he himself preferred. (Kretzmann)

We have the Son by believing all that God has testified concerning Him. This faith is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). We possess the gift of eternal life now by believing in Jesus. (TLSB)

5:6–12 The testimony of the apostles, the life of Jesus, and the work of the Spirit testify that God has given us life in His Son. This testimony is in stark contradiction to all who teach that God's Son did not suffer in the flesh or that He comes to us apart from the flesh of His humanity. • Heavenly Father, let us abide forever in Christ and never doubt the testimony You have given about Your beloved Son. Amen. (TLSB)

That You May Know

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

5:13–21 Like the Gospel of John, this Letter closes with a statement of purpose (Jn 21:24–25). (TLSB)

5:13 *that you may know.* Knowing this gives us confidence before God and boldness before men. (TLSB)

Another statement of the letter's purpose (see 2:26). See Introduction: Occasion and Purpose. (CSB)

The letter is finished, and the apostle now speaks his closing words, summarizing the principal points which he made in the body of the epistle: These things I wrote you in order that you might know that you have eternal life, since you believe in the name of the Son of God. The apostle is referring to everything that he wrote in this letter. His entire discussion had the aim and object of confirming the readers who have centered their faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as their Savior, in the knowledge that they thereby were the possessors of eternal life. Faith has nothing in common with doubt and uncertainty, it is not a matter of personal opinion and feeling; it is glorious, certain knowledge based upon the Word of the Gospel. We know that we have eternal life through faith because the Scripture tells us so. (Kretzmann)

The purpose of all the Scriptures is to strengthen the faith of Christians, reassuring them of the prize of eternal salvation. Christians are to draw spiritual nourishment from the Scripture again and again, so that their faith may increase and they be fortified against all temptations of life. All Christian doctrine seeks to nourish and promote the Christian faith. And that will, then, of itself promote Christian sanctification. (Stoeckhardt)

5:14 *if we ask anything according to his will.* For another condition for prayer see 3:21–22. (CSB)

And this faith has another effect in us: And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. The prayers of the believers, the real prayers, are always heard, they never return unanswered. This cheerful assurance, this frank boldness, we hold. We enter into the very presence of the Lord with the calm certainty that our petitions will be heard as we make them in faith, in firm reliance upon the sonship which was given to us in Christ. It is self-evident that we, as children of God, will ask only such things as are in accordance with the will of our heavenly Father. In other words, we leave the answering of our prayers in His hands, knowing that His wisdom and mercy always find a way to give us what is best for us, regardless of the form in which we clothe our petitions. Note that His promise is not to grant all that we ask, but to hearken to our prayers: He answers in His own way. (Kretzmann)

God knows how to give good gifts to His children (Lk 11:13). We do not always know what to ask, but His will is always for our salvation and for the salvation of all. (TLSB)

5:15 God will give whatever we ask if it is good for our salvation and the salvation of our brother. This is esp true whenever we pray for others. (TLSB)

This assurance should influence our entire attitude toward God: And if we know that He hearkens to whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we asked of Him. God always listens to the prayers of His children, reading their content even better than they intend it. We are sure of obtaining our

requests, that which we are in need of, probably not always as our petition was worded, but always as it was best for us, and as we should have offered our prayer had we been wiser. Prayer is not a dictation to God to do thus and so, but a statement of our needs as we see them. And it is our heavenly Father who gives us more than our short-sightedness permitted us to know. If we have reached this point in our Christian knowledge, then our relation toward our heavenly Father will be unclouded by any lack of trust in Him. (Kretzmann)

The Apostle referred to prayer in general as an evidence of faith. Now he turns his attention to a specific kind of prayer, intercessory prayer. He has called the attention of his readers to the various parts which essentially belong to the Christian life. Several times he has spoken of prayer, but never of intercessory prayer. He wants his Christians to know that they should prove their love also in praying for their brother. (Stoeckhardt)

5:16 Verses 16–17 illustrate the kind of petition we can be sure God will answer (see vv. 14–15). (CSB)

sin that leads to death.† In the context of this letter directed against Gnostic teaching, which denied the incarnation and threw off all moral restraints, it is probable that the “sin that leads to death” refers to the Gnostics’ adamant and persistent denial of the truth and to their shameless immorality. This kind of unrepentant and persistent sin is a sin against the Holy Spirit and leads to spiritual death. (CSB)

Any unrepented sin can lead to death (cf. v. 17). But if a believer is open to repentance and to God’s forgiveness, his sins will not lead to death. (TLSB)

give him life - God will grant forgiveness of sins and life to the brother for whom we pray. (Cf. James 5:20). (TLSB)

sin that leads to death - The idolatry of the false teachers. Misunderstanding of this passage led to a false teaching that are seven deadly or “mortal,” sins (pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, sloth) in contrast to “venial,” or forgivable sins. All sin is damnable. God forgives all who repent. (TLSB)

not say that one should pray for that - If one refuses to repent and confess Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, there is no point in asking God to forgive that person who stands condemned by his own stubborn unbelief and refusal of God’s love (John 3:18, 36). (TLSB)

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GOSPEL – John 17:11b-19

Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the

world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

17:11b-19 The text is the middle portion of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. The prayer itself is set among Jesus' teachings at the Last Supper and immediately prior to his departure for the Garden of Gethsemane. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

According to the paragraphing in Nestle 26th edition, in verses 1-5 Jesus prays for Himself, in verses 6-8 He speaks of what He has done for men, in verses 9-19 He prays specifically for the disciples, in verses 20-23 He prays for the unity of future believers, and in verses 24-26 He prays for the eventual glorification of all believers. The various sections overlap each other. Although verses 9-19 are spoken specifically for the disciples, they apply in their entirety to us today. (Buls)

The disciples must have heard this prayer, called the *Sacerdotal*, or *High-priestly Prayer*. (Buls)

17:11 *they are in the world* – Now Jesus was going to leave the world and go to the Father, but the disciples had to remain in the world. So Jesus prayed for them, placing them in the Father' care. (PBC)

Holy Father. A form of address found only here in the NT (but cf. 1Pe 1:15–16; Rev 4:8; 6:10). The name suggests both remoteness and nearness; God is both awe-inspiring and loving. (CSB)

"Holy Father" this expression is unique in the Scriptures. "Holy" is applied very frequently to the third person of the Trinity, less often to the Son, and only here to the Father. Not only is He holy in Himself but, like the Son and the Spirit, causes holiness in the life of the believer, as is immediately explained. (Buls)

Jesus is asking the Father to do that which Jesus had been doing all along. The divinity of Jesus is implied. "Them" is the disciples. "Your name" is equivalent to "Your revelation," the Word of God. "To me," Jesus, denotes the human nature of Christ. This usage reminds us of the same at Luke 10:22, where the human nature of Christ is clearly meant. "So that" introduces a purpose clause. "May be" means "to continue to be." "One" denotes a unity, an analogy, not identity. The unity of Christians among themselves is analogical, not identical, to the unity between Jesus and the Father. (Buls)

Bengel aptly remarks that the unity of Christians is by grace but that the unity of Jesus and the Father is by nature, that is, their consubstantial nature. The unity among Christians is caused by the Father, working through the Word of God, and for which unity Christ prayed. Unity among Christians is not caused by Christians themselves. They discover it among themselves when they compare with each other what they believe and practice. (Buls)

pater hagio, tērēson autous en tōi onomati sou. These words are the summary of John 17, that the Holy Father (one-time usage by the Lord) would keep the disciples of all ages strong in his name, so that the evil one cannot touch them (cf. 1 Jn 5:18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Here God's name clearly implies His power that saves His followers from the forces of evil. (PBC)

I am coming to you - “I am coming to you” is a basic Ascension text. Since Jesus’ glorification is secure, emphasis shifts to the welfare of the disciples. See Jn 14:18–19 in last Sunday’s Gospel, and today’s First Reading. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

keep them in your name – His name is his revelation, his Word.

tērēson “protect, keep under guard, keep firm”; *onomati* “name, title, authority, power”; “name” here signifies the power of the person who bears the name. Jesus, when he was on earth, displayed divine power both in saving the disciples from physical danger (for example, stilling the storm), and in keeping them united. His divine “name” is without peer (Is 9:6; Jer 23:6; Mt 1:21; 18:20; Phil 2:9–41; see also the Second Commandment and meaning and First Petition and meaning in Luther’s Small Catechism). R. C. H. Lenski (*St. John’s Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943] 1136) notes that the Father gave the “name” (revelation, Word) to Jesus so that he, in turn, would give it to his disciples to use in their ministry to the world (Acts 4:10–12). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The disciples will be exposed to danger after Jesus leaves, so Jesus is asking his Father to protect them (*tērēson autous*, literally “keep them”) against all ungodliness. The disciples have been guarding the Word; now Jesus is asking the Father to guard them and keep them in the Word. They cannot lose their connection with the saving name of Jesus. The goal is to keep the disciples one against the world, for they are already one. Oneness is broken by teaching contrary to the true doctrine. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

We are protected by the great “I Am”—the holy, proper name of God (YHWH, Kurios) that Jesus also uses for himself (Jn 8:58; cf. Ex 3:14–15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

God’s “name” is the revelation of his character and qualities. “I have revealed your name” (v 6) is equivalent to “I have revealed you,” because he who has seen the Son has seen the Father (Jn 14:9). The Epistle talks about persecution “because of the name of Christ”—that is, because of all that he is and stands for (1 Pet 4:14). “If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name” (1 Pet 4:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

hina ōsin hen kathōs hēmeis. That is, they will continue to be one in name, word, and work (cf. Jn 14:10), holding and exercising the one true faith over against all enemies that would divide them. Though this seems impossible, the true Church will, by the Lord’s miraculous power, always be one united entity (cf. v 18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

This is being faithful to Jesus’ revelation of the Father. (TLSB)

The disciples are still in the world, in the midst of unbelievers and enemies of the Gospel. Therefore the earnest petition of Christ is most necessary, that His Father, the Holy Father, that desires to keep His holy name unsullied, would keep the believers in His name, in the confession of His name, in true faith, to the

end. Only if the Father Himself takes care of His own, will the spiritual union of the believers in no wise be disturbed or brought to naught. God must keep the believers in the one true faith by the Word of His truth, which reveals and teaches His name. The preservation in faith is the work of God. To Him the believers of all times must look to keep them steadfast in His Word and faith, unto the end, as is His gracious and good will. (Kretzmann)

Jesus will leave, and the disciples will still be in the world. This is the reason for the request. The Holy Father is to guard the disciples from unholiness. When the disciples were under Jesus' care, they guarded the Word. Now under the Father's care, they are to be guarded by Him and kept in the Word. The Father is to keep them one. This is an ethic of love and agreement in purpose by staying in the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

that they may be one. The latter part of the prayer strongly emphasizes unity. Here the unity is already given, not something to be achieved. The meaning is “that they continually be one” rather than “that they become one.” The unity is to be like that between the Father and the Son. It is much more than unity of organization, but the church's present divisions are the result of the failures of Christians. (CSB)

Spiritual unity of the Church. (TLSB)

“That they may be one” means to be unified but without losing individual distinctiveness, blending and interacting with each other without losing uniqueness. Lenski argues that Jesus does not pray for them to become one but to remain one in faith in spite of the dangers that would divide them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

“That they may be one” refers first to the unity of believers with the Father through the Son, since the unity is preserved by the power of the Father's name, which he gave to his Son. Then it also refers to the communion of saints in the church. Here is visible evidence that God has not left his people on their own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

When the disciples came to faith in Jesus, they became one with him and the Father. This wasn't the oneness of essence that belonged to the Father and the Son exclusively, and it wasn't merely an outward unity. It was the spiritual oneness of all who have eternal life in Christ. The entire prayer has the one great burden that we may be preserved on oneness by complete adherence to the Word. (Judas) (PBC)

even as. Gk *kathos*, also translated “just as” in v 21. A comparison. Whereas the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in being (Dt 6:4), Christians enjoy only a similar unity, as the Gk shows. Ancient and

modern false teachers have badly muddled Jesus' words by overlooking this and arguing that the Father and Son have a unity only of will and works, not of being. Beware such false doctrine! (TLSB)

17:12 *I guarded them.* Christ's power is adequate for every need. (CSB)

During the three and one-half years of His public ministry Jesus was constantly doing what He now asks the Father to do. Note emphatic "I," the God-man. "Was with them" denotes constant and continued action. Note the repetition of words from 11. (Buls)

But Jesus adds something: "I protected them" A participle, not translated here, means "furthermore." Notice "protect" and "preserved." He protected them from loss as becomes clear in the following words. (Buls)

Up until now Jesus had protected (in v 12b the verb becomes *epfulaxa*, "guarded") the disciples, and he did a successful job. The guarding was a day-to-day responsibility. Judas is not an exception, for he was never given to Jesus by the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

As long as Jesus was present in the world, in the flesh, so long He personally tended to the keeping of His disciples in the faith. He taught, He admonished them day by day; He always revealed anew to them the name of the Father, in the Gospel which He proclaimed. And His Gospel-work had been most successful. He had kept all of the disciples whom the Father had given Him, His watchful guiding and warning had not been in vain but only in one single case, that of the son of perdition, of the traitor. In his case the Scripture had to be fulfilled. Cf. Ps. 69, 4; Acts 1, 20. (Kretzmann)

epfulaxa "guard, keep safe, protect, defend, keep under guard," imperfect tense: Jesus guarded the disciples and continued to guard them day after day until he successfully completed his earthly ministry and was about to return to heaven. "None has been lost" (in the spiritual sense of Jn 3:16) except for Judas, "one doomed to destruction" (see Ps 41:9 for the prophecy). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

the one doomed to destruction.† Lit. "the son of destruction" (see 2Th 2:3), i.e., one belonging to the sphere of damnation and destined for destruction. (CSB)

"None of them was lost" is to be taken literally. The keeping and preserving which Jesus did through the Word of God was truly effective. "Except" can mean either "except" or "but." Jesus is not saying that His keeping and preserving was ineffective in one case. "The son of perdition" is, of course, Judas. Judas was not lost because Jesus' Word could not or did not preserve him. (Buls)

Bengel: He destroyed himself, Acts 1:25.

Fahling: He was chosen in good faith, but he turned traitor, and thus Scripture was fulfilled. (Buls)

The purpose clause at the end of this verse cannot mean that Scripture foreordained that Judas would be lost but that no one caught God (in the person of Jesus) off guard. John 6:70.71; 13:26 make it clear that Jesus warned Judas again and again. What he did, he did deliberately, a warning to us all. (Buls)

Scripture might be fulfilled – God remained in control. God brings about good from evil despite people’s bad intentions. (TLSB)

17:13 *these things I speak* - “I say these things” refers to Jesus’ audible prayer, which the disciples heard clearly. Why did Jesus pray in their hearing? Luther answers: “In order that through the Word, caught with the ears and held in the hearts, they be comforted, joyfully rely upon it, and be able to say: See, this is what my Lord Christ said . . . this have I heard from his mouth. What is needed here is that one hold to the Word with his whole heart and take comfort in that” (Lenski, *St. John’s Gospel*, 1142). *Peplērōmenēn* “fulfill, make come true, make full as a jar filled to the brim, bring to completion”; the key to immeasurable joy is living in intimate contact with Christ, the source of all joy. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

my joy. "Now I am coming to you," Jesus, the High Priest, Who is approaching His vicarious sacrifice and praying for His disciples. The disciples heard what He said, though He was speaking to the Father. "While I am still in the world," that is, "among My disciples," as becomes clear in the purpose clause: "so that they might be having My very own joy lastingly fulfilled in themselves." (Buls)

Note four things:

1. It is a constant "having;"
2. It is Jesus' very own joy;
3. It is not partial but total;
4. It is their very own.

How could Jesus speak of such great joy on such a sad occasion? Because He was certain that the Father would keep them by means of the Word and because of the joy that lay before Him, despite the cross, of sitting at the Father's right hand, Hebrews 12:2. Jesus rested in His Father's love. We rest in Jesus' love. The makes His joy complete in us, John 15:10.11. (Buls)

Luther: Now if someone wants to know whether he is elected or in what relation he stands to God, let him but look upon the mouth of Jesus, that is, upon these and similar verses. (Buls)

Now Jesus places them in the Father’s keeping. The disciples are to have the full measure of Jesus’ joy, even in the midst of a hateful world. Jesus speaks all this in audible words so that the disciples might hear and trust. Jesus will still be involved in the protection of the disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

But now the sojourn of Christ on earth was drawing to a close; no more would He be present with His disciples in the terms of personal, visible contact to which they had become accustomed. Jesus was going to the Father, and therefore He was making this prayer in their presence, while He was yet in the world, that they might be convinced of His personal interest in them, of His unchanging solicitude for them. His urgent prayer for their preservation in the faith should give them the assurance, as it should to the believers of all times, that nothing is left undone which will assist them in the midst of all the perils of the world and their own flesh. That is a source of wonderful comfort to the believers, that gives them the fullness of joy. Theirs, then, is a joy in Christ; they are happy over the fact that they are Christians, that they are intimates of the Father. This joy must drive out every bit of doubt as to a person's remaining in faith to the end, just as this entire section of Christ's prayer contains nothing but comfort for every Christian. Where there is such intimacy as between God and Christ, on the one hand, and the believers, on the other, all fear and doubts must vanish. "Now if some one wants to know whether he is elected or in what relation he stands to God, let him but look upon the mouth of Jesus, that is, upon these and similar verses. For though a person cannot say of a certainty who will be elected in the future and remain to the end, yet this is certainly true, that whosoever is called and comes thereto, namely, to hear this revelation, that is, the Word of Christ, provided he accept it in all sincerity, that is, fully hold and believe that it is true, they are the ones that are given to Christ by the Father . (Kretzmann)

17:14 *given them your word* – The word "gift" in its various forms and always denoting a gift, occurs seventeen times in this chapter, unparalleled in the New Testament. And "world" in its various meanings occurs eighteen times, also unparalleled. Note emphatic "I have given" denotes a lasting gift, perfect tense. (Buls)

Lenski: This time he uses a word which points especially to the substance; but he retains the verb 'to give' for the Word is always a pure gift which emanates from grace in the Giver. (Buls)

We so easily grow tired of the Word of God or take it for granted. It is always a gift. This gift comes to us as a gift from the Father through Jesus Himself. (Buls)

"The world" here means the unbelieving among men. Their reason for hating disciples is now given. "They are not of the world" means "of the nature of the world." He means the sinful world. Jesus, in His own right, is not of the nature of the world. His disciples, by their union of faith in Jesus, likewise are not of the nature of the sinful world. The world hates Christians because they have the gift of God in Christ, His Word. This is a burden which Christians must bear. (Buls)

Kretzmann: There is no need of following the lead of enthusiasts that prate of new revelations, the inner light, and keys to Scriptures. The Word of the Gospel as we have it in Scriptures is all-sufficient for all needs. (Buls)

Jesus gave the disciples the Word, and now the world hates them because the Word changed them. They are no longer of the world. Remember that Jesus himself is the Word; the disciples are not of the world

because they are in Christ, who is not of the world, and they came to be in Christ by means of the Word, living *and* spoken. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

the world. The world that is hostile to God and God's people (see notes on v. 5; 1:10). (CSB)

emisēsen "hate, despise, disregard, be indifferent to": there is a constant tension between the mind of Christ and the spirit of the world. The world hates Christians because Christian values are different from those of a sinful world. If we do not cooperate by joining the world in sin, we are seen as accusers and judges, true adversaries to Satan. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

not of the world. They do not have the mind-set of the world, i.e., hostility to God, for they have been "born of the Spirit" (3:8) and are "children of God" (1:12). (CSB)

Cf 15:18–19. (TLSB)

17:15 God calls Christians to be witnesses to the world (15:27), which they cannot be if they are no longer in the world. *evil one.* Satan. Cf 1Jn 2:13–14; 3:12. (TLSB)

I do not ask that you take them out of the world. The world is where Jesus' disciples are to do their work; Jesus does not wish them to be taken from it until that work is done (see v. 18). (CSB)

"You" is here used of an equal to an equal, unlike a formal "Thou" which is used of an inferior toward a superior. Therefore, the divinity of Jesus is implicit. (Buls)

Jesus does not will or pray for our separation from the world, though it be sinful, but our preservation from the evil one, the devil. How this is done is clear from verses 11 and 17. The devil is the most formidable enemy known to us. He is a liar and murderer and works through his agents among men, John 8:44. He constantly goes about like a hungry and raging lion, 1 Peter 5:8. At 2 Corinthians 11:13,14 Paul tells us that false prophets appear as Apostles of Christ but no wonder, for Satan himself appears as an angel of light. Satan constantly tempts us as he did Christ, Matthew 4:1-10. But Jesus has conquered Satan, Luke 10:10, and therefore has given us the authority to tread on Satan's great power, Luke 10:19. This does not mean that Jesus' disciples are sinless. But from God's point of view the believer does not sin because Jesus Himself keeps that person and so the devil cannot touch him, 1 John 5:18. If it weren't for the Atonement, Jesus' prayers to the Father, and the Word of God, we wouldn't stand a chance, no matter how pious we might appear. (Buls)

arēs "take up, take away, remove": we have a natural desire, to take the less painful path, but that desire is not what God wants for his people. We have another purpose; namely, to minister to those with whom we come into contact. *Ponērou* "evil one, one of the devil, malignant": when Jesus taught the disciples to

pray, he included a similar petition, “but deliver us from evil.” (See also Ps 121:7–8; 2 Thess. 3:3.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

the evil one. Especially active in the world (1Jn 5:19), making God’s protection indispensable. (CSB)

Satan. Cf 1Jn 2:13–14; 3:12. (TLSB)

The Christians, then, are perfectly willing and satisfied to occupy the position in which the world places them by its hatred, since thereby they are identified more fully with Christ. Purposely, therefore, Jesus does not ask that the believers be taken out of the world, that they be removed from the proximity of harm and danger and hatred, but only that the Father would keep them, shield them against the wiles of the devil. That is the one side of the Christians' preservation in faith, which is the work of God. God guards and protects them from their enemies, the world and the devil, by not permitting these enemies to seduce them, nor lead them into misbelief, despair, or other great shame and vice. That danger is always present, and many a believer has been overcome, since he did not trust in the power of God alone. (Kretzmann)

17:16 Compare this verse with 14^b. Because of the prayer of Jesus, the Father keeps them from Satan. This is what separates them from the sinful world and its nature. Jesus does not pray that the Father keep Jesus from Satan. He needn't ask that for He is true God and He Himself conquered Satan in our behalf. Because of this victory the Father keeps believers from Satan through the Word so that, like Jesus, they are not of the world. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: Jesus knows the world better than do the disciples. (Buls)

Verse 16 leads right into verse 17. Note that in both verses 15 and 17 the object is the disciples, not Jesus. He is not praying for what the Father should do for Him but for the disciples. (Buls)

If they are taken out of the world, they can no longer do their job. The evil one (*tou ponērou*) can be seen as referring to Satan. Jesus includes protection from the devil and all else. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

kosmou “world, humankind,” especially populated with those hostile to God and his purpose. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

17:17 *Sanctify.* Bengel: Claim them wholly to Thyself. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The Christians are sanctified, separated from the world, as soon as faith had been worked in their hearts. (Buls)

Lenski: 'Sanctify' means to set apart for God and to devote only to Him. (Buls)

“sanctify” (vv 17, 19) is more properly translated “to dedicate what is already holy” in these verses instead of the more traditional “sanctify” (R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960] 193). Lenski suggests it be translated “to set apart for God . . . to separate from all profane connection, and to be devoted to God alone” (1146). It is the Word of God that purifies our hearts and minds. Armed with it, we are called to be salt and light (Mt 5:13–16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

hagiason. “Sanctify” means “to set apart for God.” Jesus began in them the process of sanctification, but they need help to continue in the process. The Word of God is wholly the truth. Only by the Word of truth will the disciples be sanctified. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

God sets His people apart from the world by means of His Word. (TLSB)

by the truth; your word.† Christians are sanctified (made holy) by the word of God, a means by which the Holy Spirit produces faith. Sanctification and revelation (as recorded in God’s word) go together. For the connection of Christ’s teaching with truth cf. 8:31–32. (CSB)

Only God can accomplish this. Man, no matter how pious or respected he may be, cannot do it by his own works, worthiness, prayers or endeavors. How does God accomplish this? "By the truth," a prepositional phrase denoting manner or means. (Buls)

Thayer: Truth: The truth, as taught in the Christian religion, respecting God and the execution of his purposes through Christ, opposed alike to the superstitions of the Gentiles and the inventions of the Jews, and to the corrupt opinions and precepts of false teachers even among Christians. (Buls)

Well said. And then Jesus adds: "Your Word is Truth." The substance of God's Word, both Law and Gospel, is Truth. The Christian, like Christ, is not of the world which is constantly floundering and sinking in a sea of uncertainty. Only the Father, at the prayers of Jesus, can *AND DOES* sanctify, set aside, assure, make certain and confident. And He does this by means of the *THE TRUTH, THE WORD OF GOD*. (Buls)

And therefore the prayer of Jesus takes this factor into account. He asks that God complete the separation between the believers and the world, sanctify the disciples wholly by consecrating them to God alone, through the power of the Word. The Christians are sanctified, separated from the world, as soon as faith has been wrought in their hearts. But it is the power of God in the Word which must continue to keep them separated and consecrated. And this sanctification and these fruits of faith are not our work and ability, but God's mercy and divine power. The believers being thus set apart through the power of the Word, they are ready for their great ministry. (Kretzmann)

17:18 *As you sent me ... I have sent them.* Jesus' mission is one of the dominant themes of this Gospel and is given as the pattern for his followers. (CSB)

Jesus sends his disciples on a mission. The disciples are to complete the work that Jesus started. The mission was proclaiming the Gospel to the entire world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

This anticipates the sending in 20:21 (cf. 13:20; 15:26-27). (TLSB)

Another "just as," the fourth and last in our text. Go back and look at the other three in verses 11, 14, 16. The communion of saints is a unity like that of Father and Son. The unbelieving world hates believers because Jesus has given them the Father's Word, but worry not for this is a proof of the fact that they are not of the world, just as Jesus is not of this world. You are not alone. Believers are not of the world because the Father Himself sets them aside, and this He does through the Word. (Buls)

Back to verse 18: We cherish Christmas because on that occasion we remember that the Father sent His Son among men, into the world. The difference between what the commission of Christ accomplished, and what the commission of the disciples accomplishes is brought out in verse 19, but we mention here that, in a sense, every day of the life of a Christian is like Christmas because Jesus is sending the Christian among men, into the world. This commission covers the entire life of the Christian: his public and private life, his relationship to members of his family, the use of time, confessing Jesus in word and deed before men, etc. (Buls)

into the world. We may long for heaven, but it is on earth that our work is done. (CSB)

Even as God sent the Son into the world to preach and bring salvation, so the Son, in turn, sends the believers out into the world to preach the redemption that has been earned by Jesus. They should be witnesses for the truth, they should confess Christ. They are His witnesses to the world, for all men are included both under sin and under grace, John 3, 16. (Kretzmann)

17:19 *I consecrate myself.* This statement appears to be unparalleled. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) the verb is used of consecrating priests (Ex 28:41) and sacrifices (Ex 28:38; Nu 18:9). Jesus solemnly "sets himself apart to do God's will," which at this point meant his death. (CSB)

Gk *hagiazō*, same word translated "sanctify" in v 17. Jesus set Himself apart to do the saving work for which the Father sent Him. (TLSB)

In the midst of the unbelieving world Christ wanted to build His Church. And in order that this might be accomplished, in order that the work of the disciples might be done with the feeling of free and full consecration, Jesus consecrates Himself, gives Himself as a sacrifice for the whole world. He is about to enter upon His Passion now to work a perfect redemption. (Kretzmann)

The Father sent the Son as the great High Priest. Verse 19 grows out of verse 18. Disciples cannot be sent until they know what is said in verse 19. "In their stead," is vicarious. In their stead Jesus sanctified Himself, set Himself aside for the purpose of suffering, dying, rising again, ascending to the Father in the stead of and for the sake of the disciples. "May be" is the perfect passive participle and is durative, denoting consummation, not just in the life to come, but now already. And "sanctify" repeats what He said in verse 17, "by means of Truth," the Word of God. Forms of "sanctify" occur three times, once in 17 with the Father as Sanctifier through the Word, secondly in 19 with the Son Who sanctifies Himself (the vicarious atonement), and finally in the passive voice of the disciples who have been sanctified through the Truth. (Buls)

In verses 6-19 Jesus prays only for His own, His disciples, you and me too. In verse 6 He says: "I do not make request for the world." This passage does not deny the universal atonement. As someone has said: "Jesus is not praying against the world." But in this passage He prays only for His disciples to assure them of the things that are the most necessary: (Buls)

1. The actual unity of all believers in the Father and the Son;
2. The gift of the Word from the Father and the Son which assures us that we will not be lost and which separates us from the unbelieving world and Satan;
3. That the joy of Christ is our very own;
4. That we should not become be disconcerted over the hatred of the world;
5. That the Son sanctified us through the Word, the Truth;
6. That the life of the Christian has a true purpose, as certain as that of the sending of the Son into the world.

The whole passage is purest Gospel. (Buls)

that they also may be ... sanctified. Jesus died on the cross not only to save us but also to consecrate us to God's service. (CSB)

Every believer that accepts this deliverance, this redemption, thereby is separated from the hostile, unbelieving world and consecrated in and for the truth of the Gospel. Thus the disciples are sanctified and remain sanctified; they remain in the Word of Truth, in and through which the sin which persists in troubling them is forgiven, and they receive strength both to combat the evil and to carry out the will of the Lord for the proclamation of the Word to others. (Kretzmann)

17:20-26 The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus began at 17:1. The first petition of this prayer encompasses 17:1-5. Within this petition, Jesus prays for himself—that his Father would guide him through all that

stood before him at that hour (the cross) and that through it all, the glory of the Father would be seen in Jesus as he redeemed the world. The second petition (17:6–19) includes Jesus’ prayer for his disciples, particularly the Eleven. He asks the Father to keep them as “one” (17:11), united in the faith delivered to them (and entrusted to them) to carry forward into the world. Notice 17:19, where Jesus consecrates himself—that he would be up to the task to redeem those entrusted to his care while on earth. Our text picks up with the third petition of this beautiful prayer of Jesus. Here he expands his prayer to include the entire world—and all who would ever live on the earth. He asks that the profound mysteries of the Gospel would be proclaimed to all people of all time, so that they, too, through faith, would become one with the Father and himself and receive the gift of eternal life that he would accomplish in the hours that now loomed ominously before him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)