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The Election of Matthias and the Completion of the Apostolic College (Acts 1, 15-26)

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Abstract

The present study with the title: *The election of Matthias and the Completion of the Apostolic College (Acts 1, 15-26)*, aims to first address the context, the necessity and the method of the completion of the apostolic college for the designation, election and ministry that Judas had. The context and necessity of Judas' replacement within the apostolic college arose out of his willing relinquishment of his apostleship and subsequent betrayal. The vacancy of that place in the college of the Apostles determined the election of another person in order to complete the apostolic college number 12, being in accordance with the 12 tribes of Israel. What holds our attention in this event is the method of election and the conditions that had to be fulfilled by the future Apostle. As for the method of election, this was done through the "lots of this ministry", and the stated conditions for the validity of the election are clearly imposed: the person must be a man and have witnessed the entire earthly activity of Jesus, respectively since John's baptism until the day of Jesus' Ascension to Heaven, including the truth of the Lord's Resurrection.

Keywords

Matthias, election, apostle, ministry, context, apostolic college.

Preliminary

Through the present exposition I will try to present the relevance of a major event in the life of the first primary Christian community, namely the *Election of Matthias and the completion of the apostolic college* (Acts 1,15-26). The account of this important scriptural episode is described by Saint Luke the Evangelist in chapter 1, 15-26, of the book Acts of the Holy Apostles.

The thematic and analytical framework of the theme, as well as the research objectives and directions that I will focus on, are structured in three parts, having as research directions: the historical context, the necessity and the method of completing the apostolic college.

The research methods used in this scientific approach are based on the opinions of the Holy Fathers, through which I will seek to highlight the authentic meaning expressed by the sanctified author from the perspective of biblical exegesis.

The current character of the topic is noted both by its theological message and by the elements of exegesis carried out and argued, with the aim of highlighting the theological and historical aspects included in the present research.

I. Introductory elements

In the contents of the book *Acts of the Holy Apostles*, its author gives the first history of the origin of Christian teaching, the beginning of the mission through the power of the Holy Spirit received at Pentecost and its propagation in the Greco-Roman environment and throughout the civilized world of antiquity reaching from Jerusalem to the other territories of Judea, then to Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece and to Rome. This propagation was made possible by the extensive missionary activity of Saint Paul the Apostle who preached the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, but his main interest was to bring the Gentiles to the teaching of Christ¹.

¹ John CORRIE (ed.), *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 2007, p. 278.

Prior to the moment of describing the events related to the preaching of the Holy Apostle Paul through the three missionary journeys, in the first part of the book we have reproduced a sequence of events that present what biblical exegetes call the “golden age” of the Church, i.e. the first years of the Christian community from Jerusalem² These events are presented in a well-articulated narrative structure out of the desire to provide the reader with a key to reading the book as closely as possible to the text³ and clearly perceptible.

Starting from this element preceding the Pauline preaching transposed by the author of the book *Acts of the Apostles*, I considered it appropriate to present the introductory elements that precede the topic chosen for research before the topic addressed.

- a. *The prologue of the book (Acts 1,1-2)* where we find the identity of the addressee presented, in the person of the patrician Theophilus – Θεόφιλος⁴;
- b. *The Event of the Resurrection in the kerygmatic and cultic tradition of the early Church (Acts 1, 3-8)*, Saint Luke the Evangelist in the book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles being the only one who provides details about the forty days spent by Jesus after the resurrection with the Apostles ;
- c. *The Ascension of Jesus to heaven (Acts 1, 9-11)*, St. Luke addresses a well-educated pagan public well versed in the mythology transmitted by the Homeric poems and for this reason the description of the moment of Jesus’ Ascension to Heaven can be perceived as a reply to the concept of “apotheosis”, by which a human being, in this case the emperor, became a “god” after death, in other words the post mortem divinization of the emperor⁵;
- d. *The first Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 1, 12-14)*, account in which we have a brief presentation of the first Christian

² Cristian BĂDILIȚĂ, *Noul Testament - Faptele Apostolilor*; Ediție bilingvă, Editura Vremea, București, 2017, p. 179.

³ Constantin PREDĂ, “Credința și viața Bisericii primare. O analiză a Faptelor Apostolilor (Teză de doctorat)”, in: *Studii Teologice*, LIV (2002) 1-2, p. 16.

⁴ Theophilus’ name does appear once more in the New Testament, however-in the introduction to the book of Acts. This is our first clue regarding an assertion that is commonly made about the author of the Third Gospel: He is also responsible for writing Acts. (See, Mikeal C. PARSONS, *Luke-Storyteller; Interpreter; Evangelist*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody Massachusetts, 2007, p. 2).

⁵ Cristian BĂDILIȚĂ, *Noul Testament - Faptele Apostolilor...*, p. 167.

community that came into existence after the Lord's Ascension to Heaven;

- e. *The election of Matthias and the completion of the apostolic college (Acts 1, 15-26)*, an aspect on which I will insist in the content of this study.

What holds our attention in these stated accounts is the fact that the events are in accordance with God's plan, the history recounted by the author of the *Book of Acts* is a history that has salvation as its perspective.

II. Historical context and the necessity of choice

In the isagogical part of the first chapter, the author records a detail that is by no means devoid of significance, a detail that is meant to reveal the central subject of his work: "...all that Jesus began to do and to teach..."(Acts 1,1), which leads us to get a clear idea of the fact that all the details are presented from the perspective of the Resurrection event, the Easter faith in the light of the message of Jesus and His witnesses.

In this context, the time interval from the Lord's Ascension to Heaven and the feast of Pentecost, when the first Christian community in Jerusalem was gathered to pray to God, is also presented. According to the Lucan account, the first Christian community consisted of approximately one hundred and twenty people: "...and their number was about one hundred and twenty..." (Acts 1,15), but according to later accounts their number it grew every day. Taking into account the circumstances, the original core or group of brothers to which the author of the book refers can be considered as the first Christians. Others were added to their ranks, and the more numerous those who joined the community and testified to the faith, the more credible that testimony was. Practically, through these Lucan histories that deal successively with the life of the first primary Christian community, we can notice both its daily life and its openness to the outside world.

In the midst of these brothers, Peter standing up and speaking in their name and with their agreement, this because a kerygmatic preaching is first of all a testimony⁶, highlights the fact that the number of Apostles, depleted

⁶ Pr. Dr. Sabin VERZAN, "Sfinții Apostoli în fața îndatoririi de a propovădui Evanghelia la toate neamurile", in: *Studii Teologice*, XLVIII, (1996) 1-2, p. 19.

by the death of Judas Iscariot, had to be replenished. The appointment of a replacement for Judas, the selling apostle, was a necessary and logical event. The election of the twelfth Apostle, after the fall of Judas Iscariot, sheds light on the importance that the Church shows to the structures established by the Lord, the apostolic priesthood, which asserts itself, first of all through the Holy Apostles as a group and through the individuals who compose it.

At the same time, the completion of the group of apostles highlights the dynamism of the Church and shows its ability to overcome certain unforeseen situations. The restoration of the number of twelve in relation to the group of Holy Apostles appears as a historical necessity, thus excluding a major imperfection in the Teacher-disciples relationship⁷.

From the contents of the Holy Gospels we learn that the Savior chose twelve disciples who followed him during his earthly activity and whom he trained for approximately three years in order to fulfill the mission of preaching the good news of the salvation of the human race. This number is associated with the number of the tribes of Israel, respectively, after the number of the 12 sons of Jacob later named by the Lord: Israel, only this time the number appears in a missionary context, because the twelve will be sent to preach the saving doctrine⁸. Viewed from another perspective, the twelve represent the new Israel called to testify before the world⁹, which is why, at the descent of the Holy Spirit, the representatives of the new Israel had to be perfectly defined in this formula.

III. The election of Matthias as a member of the apostolic college

The scriptural account of the election of Matthias is well structured both narratively and theologically. From a narrative point of view, the account is in correlation with previous events, and from a theological point of view, the event of Matthias' election sums up two aspects:

⁷ Pr. Dr. Sabin VERZAN, "Faptele Apostolilor (capitolele 1 și 2). Note exegetice", in: *Ortodoxia*, XLVI (1994) 1, p. 35.

⁸ Cristian BĂDILIȚĂ, *Noul Testament-Evanghelia după Matei*, Ediție bilingvă, Editura Vremea, București, 2015, p. 246.

⁹ Charles Harold DODD, *Conformément aux Écritures*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1968, p. 59.

- a. completion of the apostolic college after the Lord's Ascension;
- b. the endowment with "power" through the descent of the Holy Spirit. The feminine noun "power" does not refer to the physical or intellectual capacity to act, but to the divine authority that the apostles were to exercise¹⁰.

As for the account of the organization of the election of the twelfth apostle after the infamous death of Judas, we note the fact that the interest of the account is not focused on Matthias, but on the involvement of Saint Peter, which is why in the introduction of the speech, we find an ingenious wording regarding this aspect: *Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις ἀναστὰς Πέτρος ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀδελφῶν εἶπεν (ἦν τε ὄχλος ὀνομάτων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ὡς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι) - And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (and their number was about a hundred twenty), he said...(Acts 1, 15).*

In the prologue of the speech, the author of the book Acts of the Apostles tends to emphasize the result of the evangelization action, which is initially fixed in Jerusalem and its surroundings. The primary community is seen as a big family, that is why Saint Peter addresses its members with the appellation: *brothers - ἀδελφῶν (Acts 1, 15)*, which denotes the fact that within the community the spiritual criterion prevails, not the biologically¹¹.

In this context, the number of those present is also reported, "about one hundred and twenty" (Acts 1, 15), a figure that reveals both the internal dynamism of the primary community in Jerusalem and the propagation of missionary activity.

The events of Matthias' election are inserted by the author of the book in the first Petrine speech. It is important to specify the fact that in both Roman and Hellenistic histories, speeches had an essential role¹². Considering the fact that the author of the book is addressing an audience that came from that environment, namely Greco-Roman, it was natural to use this literary form with the intention of revealing and developing a truth

¹⁰ See, *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură* – Ediție jubiliară a Sfântului Sinod – Traducere de IPS Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 2001, p. 1471.

¹¹ C. BĂDILĂȚĂ, *Noul Testament - Faptele Apostolilor*, p. 179.

¹² David E. AUNE, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville-London, 2003, p. 285.

in a unitary and precise way. The importance of the speeches presented in Acts can be deduced from their number (24 or 28), but also from the space they occupy in the structure of the book.

In these talks, we note Saint Luke's faithfulness to the historical reality of the events, which is not a succinct rendering of the facts that happened and even less a re-transcribing of the words, but a hermeneutic of them in the light of the Resurrection of Christ the Savior¹³.

In the Petrine address that we find in Acts 1, 16-26, the speaker first refers to the fall from the apostleship of Judas, an apostasy that was anticipated by the Holy Spirit through the prophet David: *Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἔδει πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν ἣν προεῖπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον διὰ στόματος Δαυὶδ περὶ Ἰούδα τοῦ γενομένου ὁδηγοῦ τοῖς συλλαβοῦσιν Ἰησοῦν - Men, brothers, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of David, spoke beforehand about Judas, who made himself a guide to those who arrested Jesus (Acts 1, 16)*

The call to the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies that the author of the book makes does not only refer to the sale of Jesus by Judas, but also to his condemnation and to the fact that his ministry must be assigned to another person: "...his office let another take it..." (Ps. 108,7)¹⁴. Saint John Chrysostom, in his commentary on the book Acts of the Holy Apostles, notes that during his speech, Saint Peter makes known to those present the unworthy gesture of Judas with some detachment: he neither gets angry nor utters insults¹⁵, but still keeps to specify the premeditated and reprehensible deed of Judas with the words: "...he made himself the guide of those who arrested Jesus" (Acts 1,16).

Regarding the fulfillment of the Scriptures, i.e. of the previously mentioned prophecies, we must emphasize the fact that the Holy Spirit does not predestinate anyone to do something, much less a fact with a negative connotation. The assertion regarding the "fulfillment of Scripture" (Acts

¹³ Lect. Dr. Constantin PREDĂ, *Propovăduirea apostolică. Structuri retorice în Faptele Apostolilor*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 2005, pp. 46-49.

¹⁴ ORIGEN, "Contra lui Celsus" 2, 11, in: ORIGEN, *Scrieri Alese - Partea a patra*, Studiu introductiv, traducere și note de Pr. Prof. Teodor Bodogae, coll. *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești*, vol. 9, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1984, pp. 108-109.

¹⁵ SF. IOAN CHRISOSTOM, *Homiliae in Acta apostolorum 3*, PG 60, 35.

1, 16), highlights God's omniscience, in the aspect of foreknowledge, because God does not think like us, he does not know like us, but in a way above us, He knows all in Himself¹⁶.

The direct reference to the address of Judas, which predominates in the isagogical part of the Petrine speech, is part of a larger section regarding the passion of Jesus Christ, and can be considered as a priority Christological interpretation of the psalmist. In this context, the destiny of Judas can be understood within that of Jesus, as one of the constitutive aspects of the passion of Jesus Christ anticipated and foretold in the Old Testament¹⁷.

The discursive element of the speech structure further emphasizes the quality of Christ's Apostle that Judas had: *ὅτι κατηριθμημένος ἦν ἐν ἡμῶν καὶ ἔλαχεν τὸν κλῆρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης* - *that he was numbered with us and had taken the lot of this ministry (Acts 1.17)*. This clarification of the situation is well anchored in the theme, highlighting two aspects:

- a. the fact that the apostasy of Judas represented the decrease in the number of apostles;
- b. notes the value, importance and necessity of Matthias' election.

The line of speech further describes the stages of Judas' dishonorable end: *Οὗτος μὲν οὖν ἐκτήσατο χωρίον ἐκ μισθοῦ τῆς ἀδικίας, καὶ πρηνῆς γενόμενος ἐλάκησεν μέσος, καὶ ἐξεχύθη πάντα τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ* - *So he acquired a land from the payment of injustice. and, falling head first, he split in the middle and all his entrails spilled out (Acts, 1,18)*. The Matthean and Lucan sources complete this sinister picture of Judas' suicide. Matthew specifies that Judas, overcome with remorse, throws the silver into the temple, leaves there, and on his way hanged himself (Matt 27, 5), and Luke insists on the detail regarding the fact that Judas fell headfirst, breaking himself at means as a result of the breaking of the rope with which he was hanged.

It is interesting to note that St. Peter highlights the idea that Judas' suicide occurred under unusual circumstances, a phenomenon that shows that the deed committed by him is particularly serious¹⁸.

¹⁶ Pr. Dumitru STĂNILAOE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, volumul I, 2nd edition, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1996, p. 159.

¹⁷ Gérard ROSSÈ, *Faptele Apostolilor. Comentariu exegetic și teologic*, transl. Silvestru-Robert Bălan, Editura Sapientia, Iași, 2016, p. 103.

¹⁸ Sabin VERZAN, "Faptele Apostolilor (capitolele 1 și 2). Note exegetice", p. 37.

Verse 19 is considered by some theologians to be a parenthesis addressed to the recipients: *καὶ γνωστὸν ἐγένετο πᾶσι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν Ἱερουσαλήμ, ὥστε κληθῆναι τὸ χωρίον ἐκεῖνο τῇ [ιδίᾳ] διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν Ἀκελδαμάχ, τοῦτ' ἔστιν, Χωρίον Αἵματος* - *And this was made known to all to those who live in Jerusalem, so that this land was called in their language Hacheldamach, that is, the Land of Blood (Acts 1, 19)*, but a parenthesis well inserted in the whole speech, with the aim of creating the connection with the fulfillment of the prophecy in the next verse.

Disappointed by the evolution of the events, Judas returns the thirty pieces of silver to the Sanhedrin, but they, not wanting to stain the treasury of the temple with the money that represented the “price of innocent blood”, bought with them an arid land from a potter called *ἡ γῆ τοῦ πωλοῦ*- *The Land of Blood* with the destination of burying foreigners who died in Jerusalem and those condemned to death.

Based on local traditions, it is said that the place suggestively called the Land of Blood is located south of Jerusalem in the valley called Ben-Hinnom, which is at the Pottery gate, a gate that the prophet Jeremiah also mentions in his book¹⁹: “Thus said the Lord: Go and buy a clay pot from the potter; take with you the elders of the people and the chief priests and go out to the valley of Ben-Hinnom, which is at the Pottery Gate”(Jeremiah 19,1).

Considering the context and subsequent circumstances, it was not appropriate that the feast of Pentecost should find the apostolic council incomplete, therefore, in accordance with the prophecy in the book of Psalms: *Γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν βίβλῳ ψαλμῶν, Γενηθήτω ἡ ἔπαυλις αὐτοῦ ἔρημος καὶ μὴ ἔστω ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν αὐτῇ, ἢ καί, Τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν αὐτοῦ λαβέτω ἕτερος* - *For it is written in the Book of Psalms: Let his house be desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it! And let another take his service*, a prophecy that has the character of obligation, the place or ministry from which Judas fell was to be taken by someone else.

The structural elements present at this moment of the speech are focused on the imperative of choosing a new Apostle. This requirement motivated

¹⁹ E. JACQUIER, *Les Actes des Apôtres*, deuxième édition, coll. *Etudes Bibliques*, Gabalda, Paris, 1926, p. 33.

all those present, so that in the description of the biblical narrative of the book Acts of the Holy Apostles, the method of choosing the new Apostle should be presented: *δεῖ οὖν τῶν συνελθόντων ἡμῖν ἀνδρῶν ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ ᾧ εἰσῆλθεν καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς, ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἧς ἀνελήμφθη ἀφ' ἡμῶν, μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ σὺν ἡμῖν γενέσθαι ἓνα τούτων - from the baptism of John until the day when He ascended from us, one of them to be with us a witness of His Resurrection(Acts 1,21-22).*

Regarding the method of choosing the twelfth apostle, what is of interest is the synodal procedure by which this addition to the apostolic corpus is made. Moreover, the Eastern Christian Church respects with exemplary fidelity and practices this method up to the present day.

We note from the content of the Petrine speech the three criteria of the one who will fulfill this apostolic ministry:

- to be a man - ἀνδρῶν ;
- to have the experience of the apostles;
- to have been around the Savior during his public activity and witnessed His Resurrection²⁰.

The one who joined the group of confessors and preachers of the Gospel had to have a direct experience of the entire activity of the Savior, marked in the interpretation of Saint Luke by two points of reference: from baptism to ascension (Acts 1, 22), in other words, those people who were constantly around the Savior Christ during His earthly activity, “because if someone has seen the Lord, he is also in direct fellowship with Him”²¹.

The determination of these criteria constitutes the fundamental principles of the preaching mission. The necessity of the apostolic experience, as well as the testimony of the appearance of the Lord after the Resurrection, being the sine qua non conditions to be able to become a witness of the Lord’s Resurrection. The direct experience of facts alone was not enough, but their redemptive meaning was also needed²².

²⁰ Cristian BĂDILIȚĂ, *Noul Testament - Faptele Apostolilor*; p. 185.

²¹ Gerhard KITTEL, Geoffrey W. BROMILEY, D. LITT., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, volume IV, A-N, WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999, p. 454.

²² Constantin PREDA, “Apostolatul celor doisprezece și relația sa cu cel paulin potrivit Faptelor Apostolilor”, in: *Studii Teologice*, XLIX (1997) 3-4, p. 38.

The assembly proposed two worthy men for this service, namely Joseph Varsava (son of Sava), also called Iustus, meaning the righteous one, and Matthias: *καὶ ἔστησαν δύο, Ἰωσήφ τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν, ὃς ἐπεκλήθη Ἰουδοῦς, καὶ Μαθθίαν - and they put two forward: Joseph, called Barsaba, also called Justus, and Matthias (Acts 1,23).*

Both were part of the group of seventy disciples of the Savior, but the Apostles did not know which of the two to choose, because they were both worthy of this ministry. So, the whole assembly bowed their knees and prayed to the Lord that He would show them which of the two He had chosen, to take the place of the apostleship from which Judas fell²³: *καὶ προσευξάμενοι εἶπαν, Σὺ κύριε, καρδιογνώστα πάντων, ἀνάδειξον ὃν ἐξελέξω ἐκ τούτων τῶν δύο ἕνα, λαβεῖν τὸν τόπον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης καὶ ἀποστολῆς, ἀφ' ἧς παρέβη Ἰούδας πορευθῆναι εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν ἴδιον - and, praying, they said: You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two you have chosen, to take the place of this ministry and of the apostleship from which Judas fell, to go in his place (Acts 1, 24-25).*

The fulfillment by a disciple of the conditions by which he could enter the apostleship was not enough for him to be declared an apostle. This person had first to be chosen, meaning that among those present in the house in Jerusalem, where the Apostles gathered for prayer and to hear the discourse given by Peter, were several men who had been with Christ the Lord in during His public activity. This result of Jesus' public activity obliged them to a deep analysis and understanding of the mission entrusted to them by the Lord, to the acquisition of a self-awareness, which means not only responsibility and deepening, but also an effort to self-define the apostolic mission, the position and the special condition of the apostolate²⁴.

So, through the previously stated verses, we are presented with the exact way in which the new Apostle was chosen: through prayer and with the help of the Holy Spirit, the one who inspired them to make the right choice.

²³ Pr. Grigorie T. MARCU, "Episoade din viața Bisericii creștine a veacului apostolic în expunere și interpretare lucanică", in: *Mitropolia Ardealului*, V (1960) 7-8, pp. 524-526.

²⁴ Sabin VERZAN, *Preoția ierarhică sacramentală în epoca apostolică*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1991, p. 36.

Two candidates are chosen: Joseph, called Barsabas- Justus²⁵ and Matthias, they being the ones who fulfilled the criteria according to which the apostles drew lots²⁶, and the lots fell on Matthias²⁷, who from that moment was counted in the circle of the twelve Apostles: *καὶ ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπεσεν ὁ κλῆρος ἐπὶ Μαθθίαν, καὶ συγκατεθηφασθη μετὰ τῶν ἑνδεκά ἀποστόλων - and they cast lots, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was counted together with the eleven apostles (Acts 1, 26).*

By the election of Matthias, the circle of apostles was once again complete. The destinies of the ministry is a notion used in this context to denote the apostolic ministry that Judas had practiced, which, renouncing it, had to be offered to someone else. Judas Iscariot left a vacant place in the college of the Apostles, a fact that will not happen again²⁸.

²⁵ Joseph Barsaba-Justus was one of the seventy disciples of Christ (Lk10,1). He was in Jesus' entourage until His Ascension. It was proposed by the apostolic assembly to be part of the two who will fill the vacancy of the apostleship after the fall of Judas. After the election of Matthias, Joseph-Barsabas-Iustus still remained among the seventy disciples. After the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, an event at which he was present, it seems that he preached in parts of Asia, because the Church preaches it on January 4, alongside the Council of the Seventy Disciples. (See, Dumitru BONDALICI, *Enciclopedia marilor personalități din Vechiul și Noul Testament*, Editura Diecezană, Caransebeș, 2005, p. 455).

²⁶ The drawing of lots was practiced since the Old Testament (Lev 16, 8; Num 26, 52). Urim and Thummim were used, which the LXX translates as "Showing" and "Truth". In the present case, the following procedure must have been followed: the names of the two candidates were each written on a tablet, and these were placed in a vessel or urn. It was shaken until one of those tablets jumped out, and the name of the one written on the tablet was declared chosen. (See, Dumitru ABRUDAN, Emilian CORNÎȘESCU, *Arheologia Biblică*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1994, p. 241).

²⁷ Holy Apostle Matthias was originally from Bethlehem, from the tribe of Judah. Etymologically his name *מתי* means "gift from God". He learned in Jerusalem from his childhood the Scriptures and the understanding of the Law, from Saint Simeon the recipient of God, by whom he was guided in all good deeds, living and walking on the straight paths of the Lord's commandments. Matthias was initially part of the group of the seventy disciples of the Savior, following that after the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus to heaven, Matthias was counted in the narrow group of the Apostles of the Lord, being later chosen to complete the apostolic college. (See, BONDALICI, *Enciclopedia marilor personalități din Vechiul și Noul Testament*, p. 483).

²⁸ Pr. Leon ARION, *Compendiu Neo-testamentar de introducere și exegeză*, Ploiești, 2011, p. 16.

St. Theophylact of Bulgaria states that the reason why there were not more candidates was “so that the sorrow would not increase, being included in more”²⁹. The mode of election is theocratic and not democratic. Thus, the prayer of calling for help from the Savior, called “the knower of hearts”, is uttered, emphasizing with this expression an attribute of the divine Person, God’s Omniscience.

The election of an Apostle is a public act, performed in front of everyone, so that everyone knows the event and the chosen one alike. In the present case, all members of the community participate directly in the moment of choosing the future Apostle of God³⁰.

The choice of Matthias as an apostle instead of Judas Iscariot is presented as something desired by the Persons of the Holy Trinity, a work also received by the common will of the believers who listened to and followed their preaching, at the same time giving them due respect and honor.

The restoration of the number of twelve, as far as the group of the Holy Apostles is concerned, appears as a necessity because in this way a major lack is removed in the Teacher-disciples relationship³¹.

As some exegetes claim, after Pentecost, elections like this will no longer exist, because with the help of the Holy Spirit, all decisions will be made directly³².

From the contents of this evangelical story that chronicles the way in which the election of Matthias took place and the completion of the apostolic college, it follows that in the Church there are and are manifested ministries instituted by God’s will and grace.

From this moment, the Apostles were alone, preaching the Gospel, being under the care of the Holy Spirit, who will descend upon them in the form of tongues of fire, on the day of Pentecost, when the visible foundation of the Christian Church will take place .

²⁹ SF. TEOFILACT AL BULGARIEI, *Din tâlcuirile Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur și ale altor Părinți la Faptele Sfinților Apostoli*, Sophia și Cartea Ortodoxă, București, 2007, p. 25.

³⁰ Sabin VERZAN, “Faptele Apostolilor (capitolele 1 și 2)...”, p. 41.

³¹ Sabin VERZAN, “Faptele Apostolilor (capitolele 1 și 2)...”, p. 35.

³² Cristian BĂDILIȚĂ, *Noul Testament -Faptele Apostolilor*, p. 187.

Conclusions

1. From the scriptural accounts we find that the Savior shared the glory of God with the Holy Apostles: “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one...” (Jn 17, 22). We must bear in mind that they could not begin their kerygmatic mission without completing the number of the twelve, for someone had to take the place of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell and walk in his place;
2. The apostolic ministry being a special one, not everyone could be worthy of the honor of apostleship. The manner of Matthias’ selection highlights the fact that in the Church there are and are manifested ministries instituted by God’s will and grace. The persons who occupy these offices are distinguished from the other members of the Church;
3. The election of the twelfth apostle, after the fall of Judas Iscariot, is an event that is part of the logic of things and sheds light on the importance that the Church shows to the structures established by Christ the Lord of the apostolic hierarchy, which is asserted, above all through The Holy Apostles as a group and through the individuals that compose it;
4. Thus, from the content of the scriptural pericope that we have dealt with in the content of this study, it emerges the manner in which the election of Matthias as an apostle of the Lord took place and the completion of the apostolic college in order to preach the saving teaching to all nations.