

## WHAT WAS THE CASTING OF LOTS?

The practice of casting lots is mentioned 77 times in the Bible.



Answer: The practice of casting lots is mentioned 77 times in the Bible. It is mentioned 70 times in the Old Testament and seven times in the New Testament. In spite of the many references to casting lots in the Old Testament, nothing is known about the actual lots themselves. They could have been sticks of various lengths, flat stones like coins, or some kind of dice; but their exact nature is unknown. The closest modern practice to casting lots is likely flipping a coin.

The practice of casting lots occurs most often in connection with the division of the land under Joshua (*Joshua chapter 14-21*), a procedure that God instructed the Israelites on several times in the Book of Numbers (*Numbers 26:55; 33:54; 34:13; 36:2*). God allowed the Israelites to cast lots in order to determine His will for a given situation (*Joshua 18:6-10; 1 Chronicles 24:5, 31*). Various offices and functions in the Temple were also determined by lot (*1 Chronicles 24:5, 31; 25:8-9; 26:13-14*). The sailors on Jonah's ship (*Jonah 1:7*) also cast lots to determine who had brought God's wrath upon their ship. The 11 Apostles cast lots to determine who would replace Judas (*Acts 1:26*). Casting lots eventually became a game people played and made wagers on. This is seen in the Roman soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garments (*Matthew 27:35*).

The New Testament nowhere instructs Christians to use a method similar to casting lots to help with decision making. In Acts 1, when the

apostles cast lots to determine who would replace Judas, this likely was not God's desire for the apostles. Jesus had repeatedly told the apostles to wait for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5), who would instruct them and give them wisdom. That is how we are to discern God's will today-not by casting lots, rolling dice, or flipping a coin. We should be on the alert for Satan's tricks and deceptive practices. God is the One who will stand with us and help us in times of trouble.

The obviously main reason for casting lots was the impartiality of a certain decision. No one could argue that the decision was the result of politics, nepotism, favoritism, etc. It basically was the same as the casting of dice of today. They used different means of casting, depending on the location and customs. The varied from polished sticks to coins, cards, dice, and more.

**None of the Biblical illustrations of casting lots had to do with games of chance. Every time it was used, the Israelites depended on the Lord 100% to reveal to them His will. It was an impartial way to find God's will when choices had to occur.**

**This concept is still applicable today. In all our decisions we should impartially depend on God and search for His decisions in the Word or in answer to our prayers for wisdom, strength, and knowledge of knowing what is best for ourselves and our family.**

**I am a firm believer that God will reveal to us the best way to handle a situation we might find ourselves in.**

***Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."***

***This scripture was good for the Israelites and it certainly is still good for the Christians today. Hang in there!***

# POWER *of* PRAYER