

Doctrine of Casting of Lots

1. Prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture the casting of lots was commanded by God on certain occasions to determine His will.
2. The casting of lots determined many practical matters.
 - The casting of lots determined which animal was to be sacrificed. *Leviticus 16:8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.*
 - The casting of lots determined which land was to be given to whom. *Joshua 18:6 Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. Joshua 18:10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.*
 - Which person had sinned. *Jonah 1:7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.*
3. People who did not oppose the casting of lots include the following.
 - Saul, king of Israel. *1 Samuel 14: 41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. 42 And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.*
 - David, king of Israel. *1 Chronicles 24:31 These likewise cast lots over against their brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites, even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren.*
 - The leaders of Israel. *1 Chronicles 25:8 And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.*
 - Zechariah, a wise counsellor. *1 Chronicles 26:14 And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward.*
 - Nehemiah, the governor of Jerusalem. *Nehemiah 10:34 And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law:*
4. The small as well as the great were allowed to cast lots as a means of equalizing the people.

- *1 Chronicles 26:13 And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate.*
 - *Nehemiah 11:1 And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities.*
5. The casting of lots, like all of God's provisions was subject to abuse by individuals with evil hearts.
- The garments of the Messiah would become an object for the taking by the casting of lots. *Psalms 22:18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*
 - The casting of lots would be used to enslave individuals. *Joel 3:3 And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. Nahum 3:10 Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.*
 - The casting of lots was used to determine the fate of Jerusalem. *Obadiah 11 In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.*
3. In the *New Testament* the practice of casting of lots is mention on two occasions, the crucifixion of Christ and the selection of a replacement for Judas.
- The crucifixion. *Matthew 27:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. Mark 15:24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. John 19:24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*
 - The selection of a replacement. *Acts 1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*
4. While not prohibited the casting of lots to determine the will of God is not recommended for the church which enjoys the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and a completed canon of *Scripture*.