THE QUESTION

# Did the early church keep choosing leaders by lot, as with Matthias, and how were elders chosen?

*Asked by a THF member on October 6, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 13 numbered quotations · the 25 early Christian passages and 169 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.*

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/did-the-early-church-keep-choosing-leaders-by-lot-as-with-matthias-and-how

## The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

In these passages only Matthias was chosen by lot, after prayer; later leaders were chosen another way. The church picked men in front of the people, tested their lives, took a vote, and bishops then laid hands on them with prayer. None of the writers mentions lots being used again.

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POINT 1 OF 8

## Matthias was chosen by lot, with prayer

***Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say***

Pamphilus sums up the first chapter of Acts: Matthias replaced Judas, chosen by lot through God's grace and with prayer. Tertullian also says the apostles chose Matthias by lot, on the basis of a psalm of David, before the Holy Spirit came on them.

**1** "In this chapter we also have the section about the replacing of Matthias, who was chosen by lot through the grace of God, with prayer."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Pamphilus,** *Exposition on the Acts of the Apostles* 1 (c. 250–309 AD) **Source 22, page 8** Read it in the library ›
*THF's updated English*

**2** "Having, on the authority of a prophecy found in a psalm of David, chosen Matthias by lot as the twelfth in the place of Judas, they obtained the promised power of the Holy Ghost for the gift of miracles and of utterance."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Prescription Against Heretics* 20 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 11, page 7** Read it in the library ›
*THF's updated English*

POINT 2 OF 8

## Even Matthias was chosen before the whole church

***Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say***

Cyprian points out that Peter spoke to the gathered people when an apostle was to be put in Judas's place. Irenaeus says Peter sought a replacement chosen by God. So the lot was not used in secret; it came with prayer and with the whole body of disciples present.

**3** "And afterward this is observed, according to divine instruction, in the Acts of the Apostles, when Peter speaks to the people about ordaining an apostle in the place of Judas."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 13, page 7** Read it in the library ›
*THF's updated English*

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**4** “After the resurrection of the Lord and His ascension into heaven, the Apostle Peter wanted to complete the number of the twelve apostles by electing a replacement for Judas, as chosen by God.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book III* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 4, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
*THF's updated English*

POINT 3 OF 8

## Later leaders were chosen before the people

***Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say***

Cyprian says a priest must be chosen in front of everyone and approved by public judgment. The people knew each man's life, so they could expose the wicked or confirm the good. He calls this a practice from divine tradition kept in almost every province. Lots are not part of his description.

**5** “We also see that this comes from divine authority: a priest should be chosen in the presence of the people, under the eyes of all, and should be approved as worthy and suitable by public judgment and testimony.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 13, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
*THF's updated English*

**6** “And the bishop should be chosen in the presence of the people, who have fully known each man's life and have examined each man's actions with respect to his regular conduct.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 12, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
*THF's updated English*

POINT 4 OF 8

## The church voted and bishops laid hands

***Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say***

Cyprian describes one bishop's ordination: the whole brotherhood voted, the nearby bishops gave their judgment, and hands were laid on him. A church order adds that a bishop must be ordained by two or three bishops, not by one alone, so that the witness is firm.

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**7** “So, by the vote of the whole brotherhood, and by the judgment of the bishops who had gathered in their presence and had written to you about him, the episcopate was given to him, and hands were laid on him in the place of Basilides.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* **Source 12, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
(c. 248–258 AD)
*THF's updated English*

**8** “We command that a bishop be ordained by three bishops, or at least by two.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** **Source 20, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
(c. 250–380 AD)
*THF's updated English*

POINT 5 OF 8

## Candidates were tested for blameless character

***Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say***

The Apostolic Constitutions require a bishop to be blameless and chosen by all the people, who are asked three times if he is worthy. They also list Paul's tests: sober, gentle, not greedy, not a new convert, faithful in marriage, and ruling his home well. Character, not chance, decided the choice.

**9** “He must be an excellent man, chosen by all the people. When he has been named and approved, let the people gather on the Lord's Day, together with the presbytery and the bishops who are present, and let them give their consent.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** **Source 16, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
(c. 250–380 AD)
*THF's updated English*

**10** “In this way, examination should be made when he is to receive ordination and be placed in his bishopric, to see whether he is serious, faithful, and respectable; whether he has a serious and faithful wife, or formerly had such a wife; whether he has brought up his children in a godly way and raised them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; Ephesians 6:4 and whether his servants fear and respect him and all obey him.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** **Source 21, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
(c. 250–380 AD)
*THF's updated English*

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POINT 6 OF 8

## Elders were chosen by vote and ordained

***Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say***

For presbyters, or elders, the same church order says the clergy chose the man by vote. Then the bishop laid a hand on his head in front of the other elders and deacons and prayed for the Spirit of grace. The prayer recalls Moses choosing elders whom God filled with His Spirit.

**11**

"Concerning the ordination of presbyters, I who am loved by the Lord give this constitution to you bishops: When you ordain a presbyter, O bishop, lay your hand on his head in the presence of the presbyters and deacons, and pray, saying: O Lord Almighty, our God, who created all things through Christ, and in the same way takes care of the whole world through Him."

*later in the same passage*

"Now look down also on this Your servant, who is placed into the presbytery by the vote and decision of the whole clergy, and fill him with the Spirit of grace and counsel, to help and govern Your people with a pure heart, in the same way as You looked down on Your chosen people and commanded Moses to choose elders, whom You filled with Your Spirit."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 17, page 8** Read it in the library ›

*THF's updated English*

POINT 7 OF 8

## Local churches elected their own ministers

***Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words***

Ignatius asks a church to choose a minister to send as its messenger to another church. He notes that nearby churches had already sent bishops, presbyters and deacons. This shows a congregation choosing who would serve, rather than leaving it to a lot.

**12**

"Since, according to your prayers and the compassion you feel in Christ Jesus, it has been reported to me that the Church in Antioch, Syria, has peace, it is fitting for you, as a Church of God, to choose a bishop to serve as God's ambassador for you to the brethren there, so that they may be allowed to gather together and glorify the name of God."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 2, page 7** Read it in the library ›

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POINT 8 OF 8

## Bishops traced their line to the apostles

***Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say***

Tertullian says the apostolic churches kept lists of bishops reaching back to an apostle or an apostolic man. He gives examples from Smyrna and Rome. Leaders were placed by those already in office, so each church could show where its leadership came from.

**13** “The church of Smyrna records that Polycarp was placed there by John. In the same way, the church of Rome says that Clement was ordained by Peter.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Prescription Against Heretics* 32 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 10, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
*THF's updated English*

THE LIMITS

## What these passages don’t tell us

- None of these passages says the church forbade lots or explains why they stopped appearing; they simply describe other ways of choosing.
- Several details come from later church orders, which may reflect the practice of their own time and place.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

## The Sources

The 25 early Christian passages and 169 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–25, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 26–130, in Bible order), then 64 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). “… [continues online]” marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

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## EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *25 passages from 10 writers*

### **Ignatius of Antioch**, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 1–2*

**1** *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (1885 English; on point 7) “also the nearest Churches have sent, in some cases bishops, and in others presbyters and deacons… [continues online] **read ›**

**2** *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (1885 English) **Quote 12, page 5** “also the nearest Churches have sent, in some cases bishops, and in others presbyters and deacons… [continues online] **read ›**

### **Irenaeus**, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 3–7*

**3** *Against Heresies: Book III* (on point 8) blessed apostles, having established and built up the Church, entrusted the role of the episcopate to Linus. Paul mentions Linus in the Epistles to Timothy. Anacletus succeeded him, and after… [continues online] **read ›**

**4** *Against Heresies: Book III* (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** “The Apostle Peter, therefore, after the resurrection of the Lord, and His assumption into the heavens, being desirous of filling up the number of the twelve apostles, and in electing… [continues online] **read ›**

**5** *Against Heresies: Book III* (on point 8) was also appointed by apostles in Asia to be the bishop of the Church in Smyrna. I saw him in my early youth, for he lived a very long time… [continues online] **read ›**

**6** *Against Heresies: Book II* (1885 English; on point 1) “in the one case Judas was cast away, and Matthias was ordained instead of him… [continues online] **read ›**

**7** *Against Heresies: Book II* (1885 English; on point 1) “Judas was deprived [of his office], and cast out, while Matthias was ordained in his place, according to what is written, “And his bishopric let another take.” They ought therefore… [continues online] **read ›**

### **Clement of Alexandria**, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 8–9*

**8** *Stromata* 3 (on point 5) themselves in ruling their own house, so that they may also be able to preside over the whole Church. So then, each person, in whatever calling he was called, as… [continues online] **read ›**

**9** *Stromata* 6.13 (on point 1) “apostles because they were chosen by Him who foresees even the final outcome of things. Therefore Matthias, who was not chosen with them, took Judas's place after showing himself… [continues online] **read ›**

### **Tertullian**, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 10–11*

**10** *On Prescription Against Heretics* 32 **Quote 13, page 6** in the time of the apostles, we can say this: Let them bring out the original records of their churches. Let them unfold the list of their bishops, coming down… [continues online] **read ›**

**11** *On Prescription Against Heretics* 20 (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** “then in like manner founded churches in every city, from which all the other churches, one after another, derived the tradition of the faith, and the seeds of doctrine, and… [continues online] **read ›**

### **Cyprian**, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 12–14*

**12** *Epistles* **Quotes 6, 7, pages 3, 4** “for the proper celebration of ordinations, all the… [continues online] **read ›**

**13** *Epistles* **Quotes 3, 5, pages 2, 3** “a priest be appointed in the presence of all the assembly. That is, He teaches and shows that the ordination of priests should not be carried out except with the… [continues online] **read ›**

**14** *Epistles* (on point 4) bishops, praises the clergy and people of Spain because they had replaced them through a lawful election with Sabinus and Felix. This was especially right because, according to the decision… [continues online] **read ›**

### **Apostolic Constitutions**, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 15–21*

**15** *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 1) “in Jerusalem. Matthias had been chosen as an apostle in place of the betrayer and had taken the lot of Judas, as it is said, "Let another take his bishopric… [continues online] **read ›**

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**16** *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 9, page 4** named and approved, let the people gather on the Lord's Day, together with the presbytery and the bishops who are present, and let them give their consent. And let… [continues online] **read ›**

**17** *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 11, page 5** "Concerning the ordination of presbyters, I who am loved by the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

**18** *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 6) among us, you yourselves are not ignorant of them. For you certainly know that those named by us bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, were made so by prayer and by… [continues online] **read ›**

**19** *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 5) have already said, that a bishop, a presbyter, and a deacon, when they are constituted, must be but once married, whether their wives be alive or whether they be dead… [continues online] **read ›**

**20** *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 8, page 4** "a presbyter and a deacon are to be ordained by one bishop and the rest of the clergy… [continues online] **read ›**

**21** *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 10, page 4** a one a bishop ought to be, who has been the husband of one wife… [continues online] **read ›**

**Pamphilus**, *c. 250–309 AD · source 22*

**22** *Exposition on the Acts of the Apostles* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 1, page 2** "this chapter we have also the section on the substitution of Matthias, who was elected by lot through the grace of God with prayer… [continues online] **read ›**

**Archelaus**, *c. 270–300 AD · source 23*

**23** *Disputation with Manes* 1 of the Church, and has put us in trust of the law, appointing ministers and presbyters and bishops in it. He also describes, in the places assigned separately for that… [continues online] **read ›**

**Lactantius**, *c. 290–320 AD · source 24*

**24** *Of the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died* 2 (on point 1) "that time, His apostles numbered eleven. Then Matthias was added in place of the traitor Judas, and later Paul was added. Then they were scattered throughout all the earth to… [continues online] **read ›**

**Clement of Rome** · *source 25*

**25** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (on point 8) Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be conflict regarding the office of the episcopate. For this reason, considering that they had obtained perfect foreknowledge… [continues online] **read ›**

## THE BIBLE *105 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

**26** **Genesis 13:5** Lot, who went along with Abram, also had sheep, oxen, and tents. **read ›**

**27** **Genesis 13:11** So Lot chose for himself all the region around the Jordan, and Lot set out from the east, and they separated from each other. **read ›**

**28** **Exodus 4:29** Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered the elders of the children of Israel. **read ›**

**29** **Exodus 18:21** And you yourself select able men from all the people, God-fearing, righteous men who hate arrogance, and set them over the people as captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, captains of fifties, and captains of tens. **read ›**

**30** **Exodus 24:14** And they said to the elders, "Stay quietly here until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; if anyone has a case to be judged, let him go to them." **read ›**

**31** **Exodus 34:31** Moses called them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation turned back to him; and Moses spoke to them. **read ›**

**32** **Leviticus 4:15** The elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the calf before the Lord, and they shall slaughter the calf before the Lord. **read ›**

**33** **Leviticus 16:8** Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. **read ›**

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34 **Leviticus 16:32** The priest whom they anoint, and whose hands they consecrate to serve as priest after his father, shall make atonement; he shall put on the linen garment, the holy garment. **read ›**

35 **Leviticus 21:10** And the high priest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured, and who has been consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor tear his garments; **read ›**

36 **Numbers 1:44** This is the count made by Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel, twelve men: one man for each tribe; they were by tribes, according to the houses of their families. **read ›**

37 **Numbers 11:16** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you yourself know to be elders of the people and their scribes; and bring them to the tabernacle of witness, and they shall stand there with you. **read ›**

38 **Numbers 11:24** So Moses went out and spoke the words of the Lord to the people; and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and set them all around the tabernacle. **read ›**

39 **Numbers 11:25** Then the Lord came down in a cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was upon him and put it upon the seventy men, the elders; and when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, but did not do so again. **read ›**

40 **Numbers 16:2** and they rose up before Moses, with two hundred and fifty men of the children of Israel, chiefs of the congregation, chosen for the council, and famous men. **read ›**

41 **Numbers 26:53** “To these the land shall be divided, for them to inherit by the number of names. **read ›**

42 **Numbers 26:55** By lots the land shall be divided to the names; by the tribes of their families they shall inherit. **read ›**

43 **Numbers 26:56** By lot you shall divide their inheritance between the many and the few.” **read ›**

44 **Numbers 27:17** who shall go out before them and who shall come in before them, who shall lead them out and who shall bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep that have no shepherd.” **read ›**

45 **Numbers 27:23** and he laid his hands on him and appointed him, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. **read ›**

46 **Numbers 32:28** So Moses appointed over them Eleazar the priest, Jesus the son of Nun, and the leaders of the families of the tribes of Israel. **read ›**

47 **Numbers 33:54** You shall inherit their land by lot according to your tribes. To the more numerous you shall increase their possession, and to the fewer you shall lessen their possession. Wherever a man’s name comes out, there it shall be his; you shall inherit according to the tribes of your families. **read ›**

48 **Numbers 34:18** And you shall take one leader from each tribe to divide the land for you by lot. **read ›**

49 **Deuteronomy 17:9** then you shall arise and go up to the place that the Lord your God chooses, and you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge who is in office in those days; and they shall search it out and declare to you the judgment. **read ›**

50 **Joshua 3:12** Choose for yourselves twelve men from the children of Israel, one from each tribe. **read ›**

51 **Joshua 4:4** So Jesus called twelve men of distinction from the children of Israel, one from each tribe, **read ›**

52 **Joshua 18:6** But you shall divide the land into seven portions and bring them here to me, and I will bring out the lot for you before the Lord our God. **read ›**

53 **Joshua 18:10** And Jesus cast the lot for them in Shiloh before the Lord. **read ›**

54 **Joshua 19:17** And the fourth lot came out for Issachar. **read ›**

55 **Joshua 19:24** And the fifth lot came out for Asher by their clans. **read ›**

56 **Joshua 19:40** And the seventh lot came out for Dan. **read ›**

57 **Joshua 21:8** So the children of Israel gave the Levites the cities and their surrounding lands by lot, as the Lord had commanded Moses. **read ›**

58 **Joshua 21:10** to the sons of Aaron of the clan of Kohath, of the sons of Levi, because the lot fell to them. **read ›**

59 **Judges 1:1** After the death of Jesus, the children of Israel inquired of the Lord, saying, “Who shall go up for us as leader against the Canaanites, to fight against them?” **read ›**

60 **Ruth 4:2** Then Boaz took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” And they sat down. **read ›**

61 **1 Chronicles 24:5** And he divided them by lots, these with those; for they were rulers of the holy things and rulers of the Lord, among the sons of Eleazar and among the sons of Ithamar. **read ›**

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62 **1 Chronicles 24:31** And they also received lots, as their brothers the sons of Aaron did, before the king; and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the heads of the families of the priests and of the Levites, the patriarchs Araab, as also his younger brothers. **read ›**

63 **1 Chronicles 25:8** And they also cast lots for the daily courses, small and great alike, the skilled and the learners. **read ›**

64 **1 Chronicles 25:16** the ninth, Mattaniah; his sons and his brothers, twelve; **read ›**

65 **1 Chronicles 25:21** the fourteenth, Mattithiah; his sons and his brothers, twelve; **read ›**

66 **1 Chronicles 26:13** And they cast lots, small as well as great, by the houses of their families, for each gate. **read ›**

67 **1 Chronicles 26:14** The lot for the east fell to Shelemiah and Zechariah; the sons of Soaz cast lots for Melchias, and the lot came out for the north. **read ›**

68 **1 Chronicles 26:15** To Obed-edom fell the south, opposite the house of Esephim. **read ›**

69 **1 Chronicles 26:16** The second fell to Hosah, westward, beyond the gate of the chamber of the ascent, watch opposite watch. **read ›**

70 **2 Chronicles 13:9** Did you not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and make for yourselves priests from the people of all the land? Whoever came to fill his hands with a calf of the herd and seven rams became a priest to what is no god. **read ›**

71 **Ezra 1:2** “Thus says Cyrus king of the Persians: The Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea. **read ›**

72 **Ezra 9:4** Then everyone who followed the word of the God of Israel gathered to me because of the faithlessness of the exiles; and I sat still in silence until the evening sacrifice. **read ›**

73 **Nehemiah 5:9** And I said, “The thing that you are doing is not good. You will not walk this way in the fear of our God, because of the taunts of the Gentiles our enemies. (Septuagint 2 Esdras 15:9 (Nehemiah 5:9 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

74 **Nehemiah 10:34** And we, the priests, the Levites, and the people, cast lots concerning the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God by the houses of our families, at set times year by year, to burn on the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law; (Septuagint 2 Esdras 20:35 (Nehemiah 10:34 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

75 **Proverbs 5:16** Do not let waters from your spring be spilled over for you, but let your waters go through your streets. **read ›**

76 **Proverbs 5:20** Do not spend much time with a woman who belongs to another, nor be held in the arms of one who is not your own. **read ›**

77 **Proverbs 6:14** A perverted heart devises evils; at all times such a man stirs up troubles for a city. **read ›**

78 **Proverbs 11:27** He who devises good things seeks good favor, but evil will overtake him who seeks it. **read ›**

79 **Proverbs 13:8** A man’s own wealth is the ransom of his soul, but the poor man does not stand up under threats. **read ›**

80 **Ecclesiastes 3:15** What has been already is, and what is to be has already been; and God will seek the one who is pursued. **read ›**

81 **Isaiah 15:3** Wrap yourselves in sackcloth in her squares, and lament on her rooftops and in her lanes; all of you, wail with weeping. **read ›**

82 **Amos 9:2** If they hide themselves in Hades, from there my hand shall drag them up; and if they go up to heaven, from there I will bring them down. **read ›**

83 **1 Esdras 1:2** having set the priests in their robes by their daily courses in the temple of the Lord. **read ›**

84 **1 Esdras 5:39** When the record of the descent of these men was sought in the register and was not found, they were excluded from serving as priests. **read ›**

85 **1 Esdras 7:2** supervised the holy works very carefully, working together with the elders of the Jews and the temple officials. **read ›**

86 **1 Esdras 8:46** commanding them to speak to Loddaeus and his brothers and the treasurers at that place, to send us men to serve as priests in the house of our Lord. **read ›**

87 **1 Esdras 9:4** and that whoever did not come within two or three days, according to the judgment of the ruling elders, should have his cattle given over to the temple, and he himself should be cut off from the multitude of the captivity. **read ›**

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88 **1 Esdras 9:16** Ezra the priest chose for himself men, leaders of their families, all of them by name; and they sat together on the new moon of the tenth month to examine the matter. **read ›**

89 **1 Esdras 9:43** And beside him stood Mattathias, Sammus, Ananias, Azariah, Uriah, Hezekiah, and Baalsamus, on his right; **read ›**

90 **Wisdom of Solomon 9:2** and by your wisdom formed man, to have dominion over the creatures made by you, **read ›**

91 **Susanna 1:34** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

92 **Susanna 1:50** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

93 **1 Maccabees 2:17** Then the king's officers answered and said to Mattathias, "You are a ruler, honored and great in this city, and supported by sons and brothers. **read ›**

94 **1 Maccabees 3:36** and to settle foreigners in all their borders and to distribute their land by lot. **read ›**

95 **1 Maccabees 3:55** After this Judas appointed leaders of the people, commanders of thousands and of hundreds and of fifties and of tens. **read ›**

96 **1 Maccabees 4:42** He chose unblemished priests, devoted to the law; **read ›**

97 **1 Maccabees 5:16** When Judas and the people heard these words, a great assembly gathered to decide what they should do for their brothers who were in trouble and were being attacked by them. **read ›**

98 **1 Maccabees 5:20** Three thousand men were assigned to Simon to go into Galilee, and eight thousand men to Judas for Gilead. **read ›**

99 **1 Maccabees 5:55** Now in the days when Judas and Jonathan were in Gilead, and Simon his brother was in Galilee opposite Ptolemais, **read ›**

100 **1 Maccabees 6:14** Then he called Philip, one of his friends, and set him over all his kingdom. **read ›**

101 **1 Maccabees 10:69** And Demetrius appointed Apollonius, who was over Coelesyria; and he gathered a great force and camped at Jamnia. **read ›**

102 **1 Maccabees 11:27** He confirmed him in the high priesthood and in all the other honors he had held before, and had him counted among his first friends. **read ›**

103 **1 Maccabees 13:8** and they answered with a loud voice, saying, "You are our leader in place of Judas and Jonathan your brother. **read ›**

104 **1 Maccabees 14:38** And King Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood accordingly, **read ›**

105 **1 Maccabees 14:41** and that the Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a faithful prophet should arise; **read ›**

106 **1 Maccabees 14:47** Simon accepted, and agreed to be high priest, and to be general and ethnarch of the Jews and of the priests, and to preside over them all. **read ›**

107 **2 Maccabees 3:15** The priests, throwing themselves down before the altar in their priestly robes, called toward heaven upon him who had given the law about deposits, that he would keep them safe for those who had deposited them. **read ›**

108 **2 Maccabees 14:12** He immediately summoned Nicanor, who had been commander of the elephants, appointed him governor of Judea, and sent him off, **read ›**

109 **2 Maccabees 14:13** giving orders to kill Judas himself, to scatter those with him, and to install Alcimus as high priest of the greatest temple. **read ›**

110 **2 Maccabees 14:19** So he sent Posidonius, Theodotus, and Mattathias to give and receive right hands. **read ›**

111 **4 Maccabees 4:18** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

112 **4 Maccabees 15:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

113 **1 Enoch 62:8** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

114 **Matthew 10:2** Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter; Andrew, his brother; James the son of Zebedee; John, his brother; **read ›**

115 **Mark 3:14** He appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach **read ›**

116 **Mark 3:16** Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); **read ›**

117 **Luke 6:13** When it was day, he called his disciples, and from them he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles: **read ›**

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**118** **Acts 1:13** When they came in, they went up to the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. **read ›**

**119** **Acts 1:23** They put forward two: Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. **read ›**

**120** **Acts 1:24** They prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two you have chosen **read ›**

**121** **Acts 1:26** They drew lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was counted with the eleven apostles. **read ›**

**122** **Acts 6:3** Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this work. **read ›**

**123** **Acts 14:23** They appointed elders for them in every church and, after prayer with fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. **read ›**

**124** **Acts 15:7** After much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that long ago God chose among us that through my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. **read ›**

**125** **Acts 15:22** Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, leading men among the brothers. **read ›**

**126** **Acts 16:4** As they passed through the cities, they delivered the decrees decided by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for them to observe. **read ›**

**127** **Acts 20:17** From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church. **read ›**

**128** **1 Timothy 3:1** The saying is trustworthy: if anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a good work. **read ›**

**129** **1 Timothy 3:2** The bishop therefore must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, orderly, hospitable, able to teach; **read ›**

**130** **Titus 1:5** I left you in Crete for this reason, that you would set in order the things that were lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you— **read ›**

## ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *64 verses, by reference*

*Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.*

**Genesis** 4:25

**Leviticus** 15:18

**Deuteronomy** 8:18 · 20:5 · 20:19

**Proverbs** 9:17

**Isaiah** 50:9

**Jeremiah** 23:24

**Matthew** 6:19 · 6:24 · 7:21 · 18:20 · 19:6 · 23:9 · 28:19

**Mark** 4:34 · 16:15

**Luke** 6:46 · 14:11 · 20:25 · 20:27 · 20:34

**John** 1:8 · 3:6 · 6:27

**Acts** 1:1 · 1:15 · 1:20 · 9:5 · 10:13 · 10:34 · 11:15 · 15:1 · 15:9 · 15:13 · 15:23

**Romans** 7:4 · 7:12 · 14:19 · 14:21

**1 Corinthians** 6:12 · 6:18 · 7:5 · 7:8 · 7:9 · 7:14 · 7:32 · 7:39 · 10:20 · 14:33

**2 Corinthians** 11:3

**Galatians** 5:13 · 5:17

**Ephesians** 6:4

**Philippians** 4:3

**Colossians** 2:20

**1 Timothy** 3:4 · 3:6 · 4:1 · 4:3 · 5:9 · 5:14

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**Titus** 1:6

**Hebrews** 13:5

*Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.*

### ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “Did the early church keep choosing leaders by lot, as with Matthias, and how were elders chosen?” on October 6, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

**Library only.** This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed above, with a link to read it.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY