

THE USE OF LOTS IN BIBLE TIMES

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Casting lot is an accepted practice in biblical times, especially, in the Old Testament. It has social, spiritual and legal relevance in the communities we find in the Bible. Today, the use of lots is discouraged in most Churches because of its association with lottery and sorcery. Lottery is often seen as an expression of greed and a desire to get rich without working for it. Of course, God's word on greed and the love of money is well-known – greed and the love of money is a form of idol worship. Similarly, any attempt to know what the future holds via lots is often described by believers as a form of sorcery. It is open to manipulation and can develop into occultism.

But why did the Lord sanction the use of lots originally? Can His intentions still be honoured today?

“Lot” is used in three ways:

❖ **Divine Guidance, Appointments and Ceremonies**

Key Verse: Proverbs 16:33 - “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.”

Leviticus 16:9-10 - “And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.”

1Chronicles 24:31 - “These also cast lots just as their brothers the sons of Aaron did, in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and Levites. The chief fathers did just as their younger brethren.

1Chronicles 25:8 - “And they cast lots for their duty, the small as well as the great, the teacher with the student.”

Nehemiah 10:34 - “We cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for bringing the wood offering into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at the appointed times year by year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God as it is written in the Law.”

Nehemiah 11:1 - “Now the leaders of the people dwelt at Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine-tenths were to dwell in other cities.”

Luke 1:9 - "... according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord."

Acts 1:26 - "And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

❖ To resolve Disputes

Key Text: Proverbs 18:18 - "Casting lots causes contentions to cease, and keeps the mighty apart."

Jonah 1:7 And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

❖ For Social Benefits

Numbers 26:55 "But the land shall be divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers.

Numbers 26:56 "According to the lot their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller."

Numbers 33:54 'And you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone's inheritance shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.

Joshua 18:6, 8, 10 "You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring the survey here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God... Then the men arose to go away; and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, "Go, walk through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh." ... Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions."

John 19:24 - "They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things."

CONCLUSIONS

It is important for us to depend entirely upon God's Holy Spirit and refrain from casting lots in order to make decisions. We walk by faith, not by sight. Unless, we are directed by the Lord's Spirit, casting lots may be a sheer waste of time. Anxieties about the future cannot be relieved by certainty about what will happen. In fact, our knowledge of what will

probably happen can bring more grief than joy, especially, if we are dependent upon visions rather than upon God, and seeking visions rather than seeking God. As for participating in the National Lottery, we must ask ourselves whether our motives are noble and helpful in our relationship with God and with others. The risk of becoming a gambler must be weighed against the uncertain possibility of becoming rich through the lottery. Whatever we do, let our actions proceed from faith in God, reverence for His will for our lives, and a mature understanding of how our life in Christ is more important than any wealth we may acquire.