

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

for *Absolute Truth*

Question: What does the Bible say about gambling?

Biblical Answer: *“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD” (Prov. 16:33).*

Comments: The Bible teaches that the casting of the “lot” (akin to stones) was once a valid means by which God revealed His specific will in certain situations. Israel’s land division for each tribe was determined by the lot (*Num. 26:55; Jos. 14-19*); it was the means by which an individual, responsible for the bringing about of a test/trial from God, was discovered (*1 Sam. 14:37-43; Jon. 1:1-7*); the high priest carried objects, Urim and Thummim, apparently also used of God in communicating His will (*Ex. 28:30; 1 Sam. 28:6*). Similarly, in the New Testament, we see the lot being cast to determine God’s selection of Matthias to replace Judas (*Acts 1:15-26*).

Now, then, is gambling a sin? *Absolutely*. First, it is noteworthy that not one of the above examples sees the lot ever being cast with material gain the goal. The casting of the lot cannot be equated with labor for survival, the “working with [one’s] hands the...good,” “in the sweat of [the] face” (*Eph. 4:28; Gen. 3:19; cf. 2 Thess. 3:7-11*). Second, to gamble is to “take a chance,” reflecting a belief, i.e., *faith*, in random happenings. This is both blasphemy and idolatry. For, “there is none other God but One” Who “worketh all things after...His own will,” and man is not to worship any other God but Him (*1 Cor. 8:4; Eph. 1:11; Ex. 34:14*). There is no “luck,” good or no, even in Bingo. Third, in the unlikely case that someone gambles while acknowledging God’s control over all things, this individual would then need to think it somehow permissible to have the thrice-Holy Lord fulfill the covetous desires of lucre-hungry man. Finally, in the same vein, such an action would be based on the belief that God still plainly speaks in specific situations apart from the Bible at the behest of man. This is not to be expected after the completion of the written word, composed of the 66 books: no more, no less.