

Having considered Paul's synagogue sermon last week, we come this week to the immediate and subsequent events that follow that sermon. Remember what I've said, beginning with chapter 13, Paul leaves on his first of three missionary journeys. The first is with Barnabas, the second with Silas, the third by himself.

And so, as we've seen, Paul and Barnabas have sailed to the island of Cyprus, sailed north up to Perga, and they've now arrived at Antioch in Pisidia (pee-sidia). And so, having preached a great sermon in the synagogue, we come now to the following events (which unfold in close sequence over a few weeks' time).

- I. The Interest of the Hearers (vv42-43)
- II. The Envy of the Jews (vv44-45)
- III. The Boldness of the Disciples (vv46-47)
- IV. The Gladness of the Gentiles (vv48-49)
- V. The Persecution of the Jews (vv50-52)

I. The Interest of the Hearers (vv42-43)

1. V42—"So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath."
2. There's a textual variant in this verse, so that some of your Bibles have "when Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue."
3. Thus, it's uncertain whether Luke wrote "when the Jews left the synagogue" or "when Paul and Barnabas left."
4. There is simply no way of knowing for certain (and to be honest), it makes no difference to the passage.
5. Luke says the "Gentiles" or "people" "kept begging" or "asking them" that these words would be preached the next week.
6. Again, there's some uncertainty if it was specifically the Gentiles who begged them or the people in general.
7. Either way, it's evident that God the Holy Spirit, had blessed Paul's sermon, and caused some of the hearers to be interested.
8. V43—"Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, whole, speaking to them persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."
9. Evidently, some of the hearts, both Jews and Gentiles, were so moved by the Spirit, they couldn't wait till the next week.
10. They followed Paul and Barnabas as they left the Synagogue, and likely were heading to their residence.
11. The scene before us, reminds me of common events that happened under the ministry of George Whitefield.
12. If you remember, as he preached during the First Great Awakening, people would follow him back to his residence.
13. And Whitefield would continual to preach to them, and help those who were under spiritual conviction.
14. This is similar to what Paul and Barnabas did—"they) persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."
15. Seemingly, as Paul and Barnabas spoke with these people, it became evident that they believed the gospel.

16. If you remember, Paul had preached Christ unto them (vv38-39), and warned them of certain judgment (vv40-41).
17. There's no doubt that these Jews and Gentiles, gave testimony to the disciples, that they believed the message.
18. Thus, they urge or persuade them "to continue in the grace of God"—by "grace" is meant, all of the spiritual blessings and provisions He has provided in Jesus Christ our Lord.
19. This is grace as opposed to merit, as these gracious provisions are given to those who deserve the opposite (grace = gospel of grace).
20. (1) To continually believe and holdfast to the gospel—this would be necessary in light of the Jewish opposition.
21. Paul exhorts them to "continue in the grace of God" because, by faith., they were already standing in it.
22. This means they were forgiven and accepted in Christ—they were no longer under law but under grace.
23. Their standing was one of grace—they were washed of all their sins and robed with the righteousness of Christ.
24. (2) To deepen your understanding and appreciation of the gospel, 2Pet.3:18—"but grow in the grace and knowledge o four Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
25. (3) To live by the grace of the gospel in humble obedience to the commands of Christ, 2Tim.2:1—"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
26. This simply means—there was not only grace provided for their justification, but also their sanctification.
27. Put another way—there was not only grace to become Christian, but there was grace to live as Christian.
28. Col.2:6—"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him"—to walk in Him is to continue in Him.
29. The Christian religion doesn't start with grace and continue with merit—it's grace upon grace, upon grace.
30. And so, the phrase "continue in the grace of God" is really shorthand for all that's included in the Christian life.

## II. The Envy of the Jews (vv44-45)

1. V44—"On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul."
2. Those who believed the message, had encouraged all of their friends and family to come to the synagogue the following week.
3. These were likely more interested Jews and devout Gentiles—it's possible there was room in the synagogue, or else Paul spoke outside.
4. Either way, Luke tells us—"But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy"—who these Jews are we are not told.
5. It seems unlikely it's the same ones who heard them gladly the previous week—it more likely refers to the Jewish leadership.
6. We read within the Gospels; it was the sin of envy that drove the Jewish leaders to give Jesus to the Romans (Matt.27:18 – 'For He knew that for envy they delivered Him').
7. Envy is best defined as a gross expression of jealousy—a jealous person wishes they had something another person has, whereas an envious person despises that person for having it.

8. What did Paul and Barnabas have that made them envious? Well, it was no doubt their influence and popularity.
9. Almost the entire city had come to hear them speak—which meant that nobody was coming to hear them speak.
10. Luke says "they opposed the things spoken by Paul" in two ways—"contradicting and blaspheming."
11. To contradict means they challenged the truthfulness of what Paul was saying—they denied it was true.
12. To blaspheme is to speak against God, which likely refers to their denial of Paul's claims about Christ.
13. In other words, in contradicting what Paul was saying, they were blaspheming against God and His word.

### III. The Boldness of the Disciples (vv46-47)

1. V46—"Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.'"
2. (1) A necessity—"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first"—why this necessity?
3. Well, first of all, this was expressly told the twelve disciples by Christ Himself, Matt.10:5-7—"Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"
4. This is further seen in Acts 1:8—"you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
5. They were to witness first in Jerusalem (Jews), then in all Judea and Samaria (Samaritans), and then to the end of the earth (Gentiles).
6. This is in part why they preached the gospel first to the Jews—because they were commanded by Christ.
7. But that begs another question—Why did Christ command them to preach the gospel first to the Jews?
8. Well, if we to go back into the OT, we would find it was always God's intention to first save a Jewish remnant.
9. The reason is rather simple—God chose the Jewish nation as the means through which Christ would come.
10. Thus, it was God's purpose to preserve a Jewish remnant, through which Christ would be born, and into whom Gentile believers would be grafted.
11. This would render the church as the true seed of Abraham, Mount Zion, New Jerusalem, and the true Israel.
12. The church can be called all of these, because their Messiah and foundation stones were all ethnic Jews.
13. (2) A judgment—"but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles."
14. The first part of this statement is simple to understand—"you reject it"—that is, they rejected the gospel.
15. But notice, to reject the gospel, is to "judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life"—this was the result of their rejection of the truth.
16. To reject the truth, is to judge yourself unworthy of everlasting life—it's to consider yourself unworthy of life.

17. Now, this doesn't deny that we are all unworthy of everlasting life—there's nothing we can do to make ourselves worthy.
18. But, another way of putting this could be—the only way to be worthy is to know how unworthy you are.
19. This was the problem of the Jews—they refused to acknowledge their need of Christ as a Savior of sinners.
20. The only way to render yourselves worthy of the gospel, is to own from the heart, your unworthiness.
21. The Jews judged themselves unworthy, because they believed deep down inside, that they were worthy.
22. Their hope was in their nationality—they were God's chosen people—they were the sons of Abraham.
23. Thus, I think there's a tint of holy sarcasm in Paul's words—because you think you're worthy, you actually judge yourself unworthy.
24. (3) A quotation, v47—"For so the Lord has commanded us: I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth."
25. Paul quotes from Isaiah 49:6, where God promises the Messiah, that He would be a light to the Gentiles.
26. Isa.49:6—"Indeed He says, It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth."
27. In its original context, this prophecy is made the Messiah—He would raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved ones of Israel.
28. He would save an elect Jewish remnant—thus, there were many Jews saved in the first century (for the example, the apostles and the first waves of converts).
29. But notice—"I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth."
30. Again, the You throughout this passage is Christ Himself—He, and He alone, is the Light of the world.
31. And yet, Paul applies this passage to himself as a minister of Christ and a member of the body of Christ.
32. Remember what our Savior said of His church—"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden."
33. The church corporately and Christians individually, are lights in that we tell others of "the Light of the world."

#### IV. The Gladness of the Gentiles (vv48-49)

1. V48—"Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed."
2. The Gentiles were glad at the good news that salvation is for all men—it's not something just for the Jews.
3. They were glad "and glorified the word of the Lord"—that means, they believed the word of the Lord.
4. To glorify the word is to believe it—it's to embrace it—and conversely, to reject it is to dishonor that word.
5. Luke then adds—"And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed"—to be appointed is to be chosen.

6. This refers to God's eternal election (or selection) of certain people unto salvation (which is by faith).
7. Notice, God didn't appoint them because He saw they would believe, He appointed them to eternal life that they would believe.
8. In other words, the way we know whether or not we've been chosen, is that in time we believe the gospel.
9. V49—"And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region"—the gospel was being preached.
10. It was being preached by Paul and Barnabas, and it was likely being shared with the newly saved Gentiles.
11. The word of God was like a forest fire—it spread from one person to the next as people believed it.
12. Notice, Luke places the emphases upon the word of God—they glorified the word—the word of the Lord spread.

#### V. The Persecution of the Jews (vv50-52)

1. V50—"But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region."
2. Here we find that the Jews (likely the Jewish leadership), did three things: (1) they stirred up the influential people of the city.
3. The phrase "devout and prominent women" likely refers to wealthy and influential Gentile proselytes, and by "chief men of the city" may refer to their husbands.
4. Either way, the Jews appealed to them in order to stir them up against the teaching of Paul and Barnabas.
5. (2) They raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas—in stirring up the people they raised up persecution.
6. To persecute is to pursue for the purpose of harassment or opposition, which seemingly came from the leaders of the city.
7. (3) They expelled them from their region—to expel is to oust, eject, or banish—they removed them from the region (again, this likely came from the prominent women and chief men of the city).
8. V51—"But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium"—to shake off the dust from your feet against someone, is a sign of judgment.
9. Because they rejected the truth, they were rejected by God—Paul and Barnabas gave them what they wanted.
10. O dear friends, there is nothing more terrifying, then when God gives up wicked people to their own desires.
11. If a person, or a people, or even a nation, continually rejects the truth, God may remove that truth from them.
12. Stop and think how frightening this is—if a nation continues to reject the truth, God may remove that truth.
13. And this could be true of an individual who, because they continue to reject the truth, God may give them what they want (that is, He will allow them to harden their hearts to the point of no return).
14. 2Thess.2:10-12—"Because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved...God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
15. V52—"And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit"—this was in contrast to the Jews who were filled with envy and hate.

16. Those who embrace the truth and make peace with God are filled with joy and the Spirit, whereas, those who reject that message and remain at war with God are filled with envy and hate.
17. Exhortation 1—Preach the word of God—Paul and Barnabas left the church at Antioch, armed with nothing else but the word of God.
18. They went out into the hostile world, with nothing but the sword of the Spirit (the word of the living God).
19. Yes, the word of God has to be rightly understood—we need to learn how to use the sword of the Spirit.
20. Paul's sermon in the synagogue and his subsequent teaching and preaching, was clear and Christ-centered.
21. Furthermore, we need to make sure that our conscience is clear with reference to any outstanding sin.
22. But brethren, it's called the sword of the Spirit for a reason, as it's the work of the Spirit apply that word.
23. Thus, at the heart of missions is the proclamation of the word of God—both its promises and threatenings.
24. Exhortation 2—Expect opposition—whenever the word of God is spoken, there will always be opposition.
25. The Scriptures speak of the kingdoms of darkness and light—we are all born into the first, and reborn into the second.
26. Those born into the kingdom of darkness hates the light, opposes the light, and refuses to come to the light.
27. Jn.3:19—"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."
28. We live in a day where you can believe anything want to, exempt believe the truth of the Holy Scripture.
29. Have you ever thought of this point? Nobody really hates the teaching of Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism.
30. But when it comes to the teaching of Christianity—abortion is murder; marriage is between one man and one woman; there are but two genders; all men are born sinners; Christ is the God-Man Savior; no one goes to heaven but believers in Christ; all others will perish in a literal and eternal hell.
31. These are truths that stir up the passions of sinful men—mention any of these are the fangs come out.
32. Why? Because man by nature is in darkness, under the power of Satan, hates the light, and refuses to believe it.
33. Exhortation 3—Expect success—we must preach the gospel regardless of opposition, knowing that God has appointed a people to eternal life.
34. Dear brethren, at the bottom of it all is grace—we can never argue anyone out of darkness into the light.
35. This is a sovereign and powerful work of God the Holy Spirit, who makes the word of God effectual.
36. And here's the encouragement—God has already appointed or chosen those who will humbly believe.
37. The doctrine of election is so far from a hinderance to evangelism, it's actually a powerful motive for it.
38. We learned about Andrew Fuller and William Carey in our SS class (both of which began the Baptist Missionary Society (and both believed in election)—God has a people and He will call them to Himself (through the ministry of His beloved people).