

# Acts 13:44-52



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44 The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord.

45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming.

46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

47 "For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.' "

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.

50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

## Appointed to Eternal Life

A couple weeks ago we covered Paul's evangelistic presentation in Antioch and the care with which he guided his listeners to confront Jesus as the Lord and Savior of the world. His words were left ringing in their ears and there must have been much debate and discussion because a week later on the next Sabbath nearly the entire town shows up to hear him again.



44 The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord.

The word of the Lord is powerful, the gospel is compelling. Do not conceal or obfuscate it, present it, know it, deliver it carefully as Paul did but always deliver the dish as it is lest you dilute, destroy or drain it of its actual power. Your whole Christian life in the midst of the world will be a battle to maintain the power in the purity of the gospel. Nothing removed, nothing added. No new angles or clever twists. Careful, clear, full, powerful presentations again and again from today until you die.



45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming.

A familiar scene. Jealous Jews. Once again their violent attempts to centralize power and disperse opposition are the very catalyst in flinging salvation out into the world. It must have been frustrating and disheartening for Paul and Barnabas, Jews themselves, to have their own kinsmen despising the offering of life itself, yet as always, God is at work in the midst of the disturbance to bring about peace on earth between the Gentiles and their Creator.



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47 "For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.' "

The unforgivable sin, a final repudiation of the Word of God. It is a terrifying thing when the minister of the Word of God turns from you to another. Yet the turn must come. Those who consistently, violently repudiate the Word of God have judged themselves and the offer of eternal life passes over them to others. This is a helpful reminder for us on where to spend our evangelistic efforts. We need to be cautious of impatience and turning too quickly from the hard hearted but on the flip side there's a whole world of lost souls and we would be wise to spread the gospel far and wide that it might land on hearts most ready and hungry to receive it.



48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

What a verse! Tying together so beautifully the threads of the sovereignty of God in salvation with the responsibility of man to turn from sin, repent and believe. Notice carefully each component.

#### 1. A hearing of the Word of the Lord

- a. A first and obviously essential prerequisite to believing something is hearing it. This is why it's so important that we keep our mouths open speaking the powerful truths of the Bible. We are how people here. Never forget that. Who in your circles isn't believing because they aren't hearing you because you're not speaking?



Romans 10:17

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

#### 2. A rejoicing over the Word of the Lord

- a. Anyone can listen, but only those moving towards believing will rejoice over the sweet sensible aroma of the life giving word's of the Lord. If all we do is listen without receiving, rejoicing, understanding the personal application to our own souls we've done little to move towards saving belief.



2 Corinthians 2:14–17

14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

#### 3. A glorifying of the word of the Lord

- a. The final step across the chasm of belief is a coming under the word of the Lord. It is not only heard and agreed to be good it is accepted for what it is in its entirety. In all its joys and judgements it is accepted, glorified to its proper place above us.



1 Thessalonians 2:13

13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

4. An appointment to eternal life (not an appointment to belief)

- a. Fourth though actually underlying everything is a prior appointment unto eternal life. A choice of God has been made for each and every person as to their eternal destination. It is not an appointment unto the choice but rather the state. A list of names has been written into the Lamb's book of life and for those found in that book their life is the arrival to the earthly human realization of the eternal spiritual reality that this creature will exist eternally forgiven and redeemed.



Ephesians 1:3–5

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

5. A belief (in the word of the Lord)

- a. Salvation does not occur completely external to the man. For salvation to be realized it must be believed. Actual sin must actually be repented of. An actual dead heart must actually be changed and come alive. An actual Word of the Lord must be heard and accepted and then and only then can the real Holy Spirit come to bridge the gap of the eternal and temporary sealing the new believer with their new saintly identity.



Romans 10:9–13

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. It is so simple, so succinct, yet so tremendously powerful and revealing into the nature of salvation and the nature of the absolute authority of God over his creatures.



49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.

Gentile conversion is in full force, but it is not Paul or Barnabas but the word of the Lord that is being spread. The message could not be any more clear. The word of the Lord prevails and where it is rejected and despised it passes over to those who will receive it, rejoice, glorify and believe.



50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

There wasn't sufficient Jewish presence in Antioch to incite any physical harm but they did succeed in pressing Paul and Barnabas to leave. As the dust falls off the feet of the apostles the time of the Jews comes to an end and the era of the Gentiles comes into full view. The dawn of our salvation turns to full day as the night falls over Israel.



52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

What may have been seen as a failure or fleeing was rather a filling with joy and the Holy Spirit. It's also a distinct mark of the disciple to be filled with both joy and the Holy Spirit. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is joy. Persecution, disappointment even death cannot squelch the eternal life of the believer.



Jude 24–25

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

## Closing Thoughts

Salvation belongs to the Lord but as far as it depends on you are you:

- Hearing the word of the Lord?
- Rejoicing the word of the Lord?
- Glorifying the word of the Lord?
- Believing the word of the Lord?